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EMERSON FROM AN INDIAN POINT OF VIEW

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Of the eminent writers who are the exponents of the spiritual movement of the nineteenth century, those whose influence is most widely acknowledged—Wordsworth, Shelley, Carlyle, Emerson—have two notable characteristics: first, they either give a very subordinate place to dogma or reject it altogether; secondly, they lay great stress on truths which from remote antiquity have most deeply impressed the Oriental mind and have been uttered with the greatest power in the East. The influence of Wordsworth as a spiritual teacher will ever be felt, in spite of the "Ecclesiastical Sonnets," to lie, not in his championship of orthodox Christianity, but in his awakening men to a sense of the Infinite revealed in the finite and to a consciousness of the immanence of the divine Spirit in the outer and the inner world. These are the truths which inspire some of Shelley's noblest lines. They find utterance in Carlyle's wisest words. And they occupy the foremost place in Emerson's message to an unspiritual world. Hence the power with which Wordsworth and Emerson appeal to the Oriental mind. They translate into the language of modern culture what was uttered by the sages of ancient India in the loftiest strains. They breathe a new life into our old faith, and they assure its stability and progress by incorporating with it precious truths revealed or brought into prominence by the wider intellectual and ethical outlook of the modern spirit. Before I dwell at any length on the spiritual affinity between the teachings of the East and the mind of Emerson, it will be convenient to consider some of his intellectual traits, which give us a key to the right interpretation of his faith.

The success of a teacher in spreading his thoughts and principles depends more upon their inherent worth, the earnestness with which they are presented, the feelings and imaginative associations they awaken, than upon the logical force of the propositions in which they are embodied. It is not those who are ready to support every statement by arguments, but those who appeal to the heart and imagination, that exercise the widest influence. Emerson belongs to this latter class. As an exponent of certain great ideas, he relies more upon the value of the ideas themselves than upon arguments. He seldom resorts to careful reasoning. This is partly due to the nature of the truths he teaches, which are almost unprovable and can only be apprehended by moral or spiritual experience. But it is also the result of the disposition of his mind. "I do not know," he says, "what arguments mean in reference to any expression of a thought. I delight in believing what I think, but if you ask how I dare say so, or why it is so, I am the most helpless of mortal men." He values insight more than clever reasoning. "It was a grand sentence of Emanuel Swedenborg," he says, "which would alone indicate the greatness of that man's perceptions: 'It is no proof of a man's understanding to be able to confirm whatever he pleases; but to be able to discern that what is true is true, and that what is false is false, this is the mark and character of intelligence.'" Himself gifted with extraordinary spiritual insight, this is the gift he most admires in others. After he had met Carlyle for the first time, he remarked that he had known many men of humbler intellectual powers who had a clearer spiritual vision than he. He says characteristically, "We know truth when we see it, from opinion, as we know when we are awake that we are awake." His bold counsel to the man who believes without being able to give a reason for it, is, "Trust the instinct to the end though you can render no reason." "Why should I give up my thought," he says, "because I cannot answer an objection to it?" "With consistency," according to him, "a great soul has nothing to do." "To great results of thought and morals," he tells Carlyle, "the steps are not many, and it is not the masters who spin the ostentatious continuity." Living in an age when an argument is demanded for everything, and when logical acuteness is considered

the great mark of superior intelligence, Emerson not only prefers insight to the power to demonstrate, spiritual perception to flawless reasoning, but he boldly defends this preference. With him, as with every great spiritual teacher, the divine intuitions of the soul are "the fountain light of all our day."

While his utterances are deeply religious, his aversion to formal or logical statements keeps them free from the slightest tinge of dogmatism. He shows the most marked aversion to theological disquisitions, and has no sympathy with those who are perplexed by theological difficulties, which he thinks never presented a practical difficulty to any man,—"never darkened across any man's road, who did not go out of his way to seek them." Puzzling questions like original sin, the origin of evil, or predestination he regards as the "mumps and measles and whooping-coughs" of the soul. "A simple mind," he declares, "will not know these enemies."

Another remarkable trait of Emerson's mind is its irresistible, ever-present tendency to see things in their entirety, to view everything in relation to the whole of which it is a part, in relation to the cause of which it is the effect, in relation to the idea of which it is the expression. Whatever is suggestive of large relationships has an attraction for him. Astrology interested him as it "tied man" to the universe. "Instead of an isolated beggar, the farthest star felt him, and he felt the star." A circle made by a pebble in a pond sets him thinking of the paths of the planets. The long intervals between the letters he receives from a friend would make him impatient, "but that they savor always of eternity," he says, and promise him a friendship not reckoned by years. He begins his essay on "Circles" characteristically: "The eye is the first circle, the horizon which it forms is the second, and throughout nature this primary figure is repeated without end." In this he sees a hint, an outward symbol, of the nature of God, described by St. Augustine as a circle whose centre is everywhere and circumference nowhere. And thus the least of things leads him up to the thought of the Infinite, the Eternal,—for the light of this great Idea so lights the chambers of his soul that it is reflected back by everything he receives into his mind. His topics range from the Over-soul to farming; but whatever his theme

he "hitches his wagon to a star," to use a favorite phrase of his, and illuminates the homeliest subject by pouring a flood of spiritual light upon it.

The material, the visible, has no finality to Emerson. Its purpose is only to suggest the invisible, the spiritual. The humblest concerns of life are interpreted by him in the light of spiritual truths. The merchant's economy is to him "a coarse symbol of the soul's economy. It is to spend for power and not for pleasure. It is to invest income; that is to say, to take up particulars into generals; days into integral eras,—literary, emotive, practical,—of its life, and still to ascend in its investment." The forms, speech, and manners of men and women who attract him have to him "a largeness of suggestion," and they "carry a certain grandeur like time and justice." Everything has a symbolic or suggestive character to him. Around every circle another can be drawn; this suggests to him "the moral fact of the Unattainable, the flying Perfect, around which the hands of man can never meet." He views the present in the light of the future, the best experiences of our earthly life being to him a foretaste and an assurance of the blessed experiences that are to be ours hereafter. Milton, he says, anticipated the leading thought of Swedenborg when he wrote:

> "What if earth
> Be but the shadow of heaven, and things therein,
> Each to the other like, more than on earth is thought?"

This idea pervades his own thoughts, and hence the sympathy with which he interprets the genius of Swedenborg. To him the spiritual world alone is real; of that original the outer world is a copy; of that cause it is the effect; of that supreme reality it is a hint. He objects, however, to Swedenborg's method of fastening each natural object to a particular theological idea; for, he says, "each individual symbol plays innumerable parts," and "in the transmission of the heavenly waters, every hose fits every hydrant." The high value which Emerson attaches to the spiritual interpretation of the outward world is strikingly shown by his verdict on Shakspere, who, he regrets, rested in the beauty of outward things, without seeking to ascend higher and unfold their spiritual meaning. It needed courage to speak thus of Shak-

spere. But he forgets that the cunning of the dramatist's genius would have failed him here. To Emerson such an interpretation of things seems easy, for it is a leaven that leaveneth all his thoughts. A pervading sense of the Infinite and faith in Mind as the supreme reality are among the most marked characteristics which Emerson and Carlyle have in common. Music leads the mind of the one to the edge of the Infinite. A beautiful face is to the other a key to the hidden meaning of the universe. The steamship is the Scottish brass-smith's Idea sailing round the world, says one. The true ship is the ship-builder, says the other. They dissolve all things into thought, reduce all things to their primal origin—the Mind. Chemistry, vegetation, metals, and animals are to them words of God.

This living faith in the Infinite, this insistent sense of the reality of the Unseen, makes Emerson a mystic in the noblest sense of the word. "By mysticism we mean," says Jowett, "not the extravagance of an erring fancy, but the concentration of reason in feeling, the enthusiastic love of the Good, the True, the One, the sense of the infinity of knowledge, and of the marvel of the human faculties." Something needs to be added to this. He is the mystic to whom the invisible is more real than the visible, who is haunted and waylaid by the thought of the Unseen, who yearns for the Infinite with a passionate yearning. It is mysticism to see more than most men into the depths of life, into the hidden things of the universe. "Men live," says Emerson, "on the brink of mysteries and harmonies into which they never enter, and with their hand on the door-latch they die outside." The writer of these words did not die outside. He had plunged into the harmonies. Hence was it that mysticism had such a charm for him. He thinks the greatest attraction which London has for the imagination is that "in such a vast variety of people and conditions we can believe there is room for persons of romantic character to exist, and that the poet, the mystic, the hero, may hope to confront their counterparts." He regrets that the Swedenborgians in general "receive the fable instead of the moral of their Æsop"; still he finds them deeply interesting, and thinks they must "contribute more than all other sects to the new faith which must arise out of all."

That the best elements of mysticism may exist in absolute independence of the extravagance of an erring fancy is shown strikingly by the clearness of Emerson's intellect, by its sustained equipoise, its undisturbed faith in the reign of law, its sympathy with culture and with all that is essentially good in civilization. He says that the laws of nature play through trade as a toy battery exhibits the effects of electricity. The great lesson that natural science teaches us is the universality of law and "the continuation of the inflexible law of matter into the subtile kingdom of will, and of thought." The fact that the earth "never loses its way in its wild path through space" teaches us that a secreter gravitation, a secreter projection, rule not less tyrannically in human history. It is short-sightedness to limit our faith in laws to those of the physical world, for laws "do not stop where our eyes lose them." He unfolds the great thought which Wordsworth expresses so beautifully in his "Ode to Duty,"

> "Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong;
> And the most ancient heavens, through Thee, are fresh and strong,"

the thought that all law is one, that the law of gravitation is but the law of duty translated into the language of atoms. He does not believe in luck, he does not believe in chance. Success, he holds, can only be attained by "close application to the laws of the world, and since those laws are intellectual and moral, by intellectual and moral obedience." The value of political economy is in this, that it teaches us "the ascendency of laws over all private and hostile influences." There is no element of caprice in the divine government of the universe. If he is a mystic, he is a clear-sighted one; nay, his mysticism lies in this, that he is able to see into the soul of things with an unclouded vision. Unswerving as is his faith in law, it only strengthens his faith in the goodness of God, it fills him with hope instead of depressing him. "Will not man one day," he asks, "open his eyes and see how dear he is to the soul of Nature,—how near it is to him? Will he not see through all he miscalls accident, that law prevails for ever and ever?" "When he perceives the law, he ceases to despond. Whilst he sees it, every thought and act is raised, and becomes an act of religion."

As Emerson's mysticism springs from keenness of vision, from a power to pierce through the mask of nature to the inner meaning of the universe, so is his religion, in its loftiest ascent, the noble product of a keen sense of beauty, which, like Wordsworth, Carlyle, Shelley, he possesses in a remarkable degree. What a noble tribute does Wordsworth pay to loveliness in his "Lines on a Highland Girl"! In *Sartor Resartus*, how does the bosom of Teufelsdröckh heave and swell under the power of Blumine; and Carlyle's impassioned homage to the beauty of the Princess de Lamballe is one of the most glowing pages in his *History of the French Revolution*. A divine discontent with all earthly beauty inspires Shelley's lines headed "The Question." Emerson calls a beautiful woman a practical poet who tames her savage mate, and plants tenderness, hope, and eloquence in all whom she approaches. He regards the refining influence of graceful and cultivated women as one of those elements of civilized life which contribute in a notable degree to the moral progress of the race. There is no monkish austerity in this saint. Beauty sends a thrill through his bosom which he is not ashamed to express. His "Ode to Beauty" could only have been written by one whose heart was pierced by the shaft of beauty. But he stands on a higher plane than Wordsworth, Shelley, and Carlyle in this, that with him the love of beauty is transformed into a spiritual passion, not occasionally, but as a constant affection of the pure mind. The love of beauty, aided by the moral sentiment, enables him to realize vividly the loveliness of virtue. The contemplation of a masterpiece of art, he says, produces a state of mind which may be called religious. In Greek architecture he sees an image of the beauty of temperance. And in him the sense of beauty attains a still higher elevation, reaching the loftiest form to which it can ascend. By union with the sense of the Infinite, it is exalted into a longing for the beauty of God, as a dew-drop touched by sunshine becomes a proclaimer of the glory of the sun. To Emerson all finite beauty is a promise and a hint of the uncontained beauty of the Supreme Being. Lovely forms, he says, do not point to "any relations of friendship or love known and described in society," but "to relations of transcendent delicacy and sweetness," to what "roses and violets hint

and foreshow." Then is personal beauty truly charming when it "suggests gleams and visions, and not earthly satisfactions." These sentences read like an exposition of Shelley's "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty." The influence of Plato on both Shelley and Emerson is marked. Plato in the *Symposium* leads the mind step by step up to the thought of the Infinite Beauty. Shelley breaks forth into a strain of impassioned utterance. Emerson presents that great idea to our minds in suggestions and affirmations which show that he lives and moves in the divine atmosphere of that thought. He does not approach Shelley in the power of poetic expression. But to him belongs the far higher gift of a steady faith in the Divine Beauty that rules his entire being.

In some of the intellectual characteristics we have noticed, in Emerson's pervading sense of the Infinite, in his tendency to see things in their entirety, in his faith in the reality of the Unseen, we have the source of the fascination which the religious thought of the East has for him. The appreciative references to it which fill his pages show the breadth of his mind, his keen eye for truth in whatever garb it may be presented, and his power to draw inspiration from all sources. He concludes his inspiring essay on "Immortality" with a fable from the *Katha-Upanishad.* In naming his productions he has in two instances borrowed words from the East,—the poem "Brahma," and the essay on "The Over-soul," in which he perhaps reaches the climax of his power both as a writer and as a spiritual teacher. "Over-soul" is really the translation of a Sanskrit word, and the English language is indebted to Emerson for having enriched its vocabulary with a word of deep spiritual meaning. In this choice of names we have an indication of the reason of the attraction which ancient Hindu thought has for him. The thought of the One in the many, the thought of the Infinite revealed in the finite, which broods over his mind like

> "a master o'er a slave,
> A presence which is not to be put by,"

is expressed with greater power and beauty in the sacred books of ancient India than anywhere else. "In all nations," says

Emerson, "there are minds which incline to dwell in the conception of the fundamental Unity. The raptures of prayer and ecstasy of devotion lose all Being in one Being. This tendency finds its highest expression in the religious writings of the East, and chiefly in the Indian Scriptures, in the Vedas, the Bhagavad Gita, and the Vishnu Purana. These writings contain little else than this idea, and they rise to pure and sublime strains in celebrating it." Of his poem "Brahma," which is the expansion of a line of the *Katha-Upanishad* reproduced in the *Bhagavad Gita*, Professor Lanman says: "The doctrine of the absolute unity finds perhaps its most striking expression in Sanskrit in the Katha-Upanishad; but nowhere, neither in Sanskrit nor in English, has it been presented with more vigor, truthfulness, and beauty of form than by Emerson in his famous lines paraphrasing the Sanskrit passage."

The thought of a Unity underlying all variety colors all his ideas. Speaking of works of art, he says, "What astonished and fascinated me in the first work astonished me in the second work also: that excellence of all things is one." The ultimate fact which we reach on every topic is, he says, "the resolution of all into the ever-blessed One." His language occasionally shows that tendency to merge the many altogether in the One, which is the basis of pantheism, and which so strongly characterizes the religious literature of ancient India. "The act of seeing and the thing seen," he says, "the seer and the spectacle, the subject and the object are one. We see the world piece by piece as the sun, the moon, the animal, the tree; but the whole, of which these are the shining parts, is the soul." These sentences remind us of the following passage of the *Chhandogya-Upanishad:* "Where one sees nothing else, hears nothing else, understands nothing else, that is the Infinite. Where one sees something else, hears something else, understands something else, that is the finite. The Infinite is immortal, the finite is mortal."

In reading Emerson, we feel that at times the thought of the Infinite rushes on like a sweeping tide and carries everything before it. But in order to interpret such utterances rightly we must take them together with others which supplement and qualify them; and we must bear in mind that they are the

expressions of a flowing current of thought or spiritual emotion, not rigid statements of a creed or dogma. Beautiful expressions of intense religious emotion become prolific sources of error when the only key to their right interpretation—the glow of imagination or spiritual fervor which inspired them—is lost, and they are applied literally and stiffened into articles of faith. Hence the apotheosis of man and the doctrine of Incarnation. Hence too the pantheistic doctrine of the absolute unity of man and God. "The religions of the world," says Emerson, "are the ejaculations of a few imaginative men." No, they are far more. But the ejaculations play a very important part in them. And too often, while they are remembered, the feelings from which they sprang are lost. Men are thus led astray from the truth. The careful reader of Emerson can have little excuse for such misinterpretation of his teachings. If he sometimes seems to lose his balance, he soon recovers it. He keeps his thoughts in a perpetual flow, never allowing them to harden into a particular form; and he freely expresses every thought as it arises, without caring for consistency. With all his admiration for the mystic, he condemns him because he "nails a symbol to one sense" and "takes an accidental and individual symbol for an universal one." "The universe is the externization of the soul," he says. "The soul feels that the grass grows and the stone falls by a law inferior to and dependent upon its nature." Again: "The world is the perennial miracle which the soul worketh." But we recover our breath when we read: "The mind does not create what it perceives, any more than the eye creates the rose." His most serious utterances on the relation of the human soul to God clearly assert the fundamental tenet of spiritual theism,—the union, not the unity, of the human soul and the Infinite Spirit: "Let man, then, learn the revelation of all nature and all thought to his heart; this namely, that the Highest dwells with him." "The soul gives itself, alone, original, and pure, to the Lonely, Original, and Pure, who on that condition gladly inhabits, leads, and speaks through it." Perhaps the most explicit statement in all Emerson's writings on the nature of the relationship of the human soul to the Infinite Mind is the following: "Man begins to hear a voice that fills the heavens and the earth, saying that God is

within him. . . . I find this amazing revelation of my immediate relation to God, a solution of all the doubts that oppressed me. I recognize the distinction of the outer and the inner self; the double consciousness that within this erring, passionate, mortal self sits a supreme, calm, immortal mind, whose powers I do not know; but it is stronger than I; it is wiser than I; it never approved me in any wrong; I seek counsel of it in my doubts; I repair to it in my dangers; I pray to it in my undertakings. It seems to me the face which the Creator uncovers to his child." Here he beautifully unfolds a well-known thought of Hindu theology,—a thought allegorically expressed by the soul and the Over-soul being likened to two birds dwelling together on one tree.

Passages like the above clearly show that Emerson's denial of the personality of God means an affirmation of the divine infinitude, not a denial of consciousness or intelligence as an attribute of the Supreme Being. To him, as to many others, the idea of personality is associated with that of limitation. "We cannot say," he declares, "God is self-conscious or not self-conscious, for the moment we cast our eye on that dread nature, it soars infinitely out of all definition and dazzles all inquest." He understands personality to mean finiteness. Nay, he even associates that idea, as we see from a passage in his essay on "Immortality," with the lower impulses and selfish instincts of human nature. But the essential meaning of personality is mind, thought, consciousness; and this he affirms of the Supreme Being in the clearest manner. What can be meant by "seeking counsel" of an unconscious being in one's doubts? In his essay on "Self-reliance" he gives us this advice: "In your metaphysics you have denied personality to the Deity, yet when the devout motions of the soul come, yield to them heart and life, though they should clothe God with shape and color." And he yields heart and life to his own devout motions, which bring with them a clear revelation of the divine mind. Nay, with him faith in the Supreme Intelligence is an abiding conviction not affected by the tides of the inner life. "We lie," he says, "in the lap of immense intelligence, which makes us receivers of its truth and organs of its activity." He teaches us to seek intellectual inspiration from

the Infinite Mind. He hears the comforting voice of God when bowed by bereavement. There can, in fact, be no clearer affirmation of the sacred right of communion with the Supreme Mind which belongs to every human soul than we have in the teachings of Emerson. And it is in communion that he, like Plato and the seers of ancient India, has a revelation of the glorious truth of immortality. Every man, he says, parts from the contemplation of the universal and eternal beauty "with the feeling that it rather belongs to ages than to mortal life." This is the experience that inspires the utterance of the Hindu sage: "By knowing Him alone does one pass beyond death." "What," Emerson writes to Carlyle, "have we to do with old age? Our existence looks to me more than ever initial. We have come to see the ground and look up materials and tools." When sorrow casts a gloom around his path he hears the divine voice:

> "Hearts are dust, hearts' loves remain;
> Heart's love will meet thee again."

After Emerson's earthly career had come to an end, James Freeman Clarke began an address on his life with these words: "The saying of the liturgy is true and wise, that in the midst of life we are in death. But it is still more true that in the midst of death we are in life." An address on such a life could not have been more appropriately begun. What a wealth of faith belonged to him who could say with unquestionable sincerity, "We are all great, all rich, in God"!

In Emerson's capacious nature there is room for the expansion and alertness of the West, as well as the concentration and serenity of the East. While he has a pervading consciousness of the Infinite as the supreme reality, he also recognizes the reality of the individual soul. He has in a large measure the polarity which he attributes to Plato. "A man is a centre for nature," he says. "If there were any magnet that would point to the countries and houses where are the persons who are intrinsically rich and powerful, I would sell all and buy it, and put myself on the road to-day." He speaks most impressively of the value of human endeavor, of the need of using aright the opportunities of the passing hour, of the supreme importance of training the will. To the

seeker of spiritual enlightenment his advice is, "Work and live, work and live." "Sufficient unto the day are the duties thereof," he says. "A man is relieved and gay when he has put his heart into his work and done his best; but what he has said or done otherwise shall give him no peace." "Do your work and you shall reinforce yourself." These are precepts which we in the East should inscribe on the tablets of our hearts. His ideal is the absolute harmony of work and worship, attained through perfect obedience to the divine will. Speaking of self-reliance, he says, "Let us not rove; let us sit at home with the cause." On the first page of his essay on "Self-reliance," we have the following beautiful sentence: "A man should learn to detect and watch that gleam of light which flashes across his mind from within, more than the lustre of the firmament of bards and sages." This inwardness, this attitude of listening for the accents of the soul, is of the East. "You are," he says, "preparing with eagerness to go and render a service to which your talent and your taste invite you, the love of men and the hope of fame. Has it not occurred to you that you have no right to go, unless you are equally willing to be prevented from going?" This, like Milton's line,

"They also serve who only stand and wait,"

is the very essence of the noblest ethical teaching of the *Bhagavad Gita*. For whatever the practice of the East may have been, the precept "work is worship" could not be more impressively inculcated than it has been in the *Gita*. With these devout spirits duty is but a form of communion. It must be acknowledged, however, that at times Emerson yields to optimism of the Oriental type and underestimates the need of human effort. He tells Carlyle that the truth can very well spare him and have itself spoken by another without leaving it or him the worse. Speaking of reformers he says: "Many a reformer perishes in his removal of rubbish, and that makes the offensiveness of the class. . . . They expend all their energy on some accidental evil, and lose their sanity and power of benefit. It is of little moment that one or two, or twenty, errors of our social system be corrected, but of much that the man be in his senses." Such language is disheartening. A man may well be forgiven a little flurry when

his neighbor's house is on fire. But such an attitude on his part is due, in some measure at least, to the insincerity and vanity he sees in many of those who assail existing institutions. And some of the most notable acts of his life are impressive object-lessons on the duty of courageous and active resistance to wrong. How noble and inspiring is the remonstrance addressed by him to the President of the United States when the Cherokees were about to be expelled from the state of Georgia! And, when Lovejoy was killed by a pro-slavery mob, we are told by eye-witnesses that Emerson's reference to him in a lecture as one who had fallen a martyr for the rights of free speech made a cold shudder "run through the audience at the calm braving of the current opinion." Great events powerfully affect great minds. The French Revolution made Edmund Burke lose his balance. The conflict with slavery enabled Emerson to gain the balance which he sometimes lacked. Dr. Garnett says that what rescues Emerson's optimism from moral indifference of the Oriental type is the fact that "his writings are full of the loftiest lessons of renunciation." But renunciation could nowhere be more impressively inculcated or practised than it has been in the East. It is righteous indignation and insistence on the value of human effort that deliver Emerson from moral languor. His faith in the greatness of man's destiny, his lofty ideals, and his sincerity inspire him with a passion for moral and spiritual freedom which nothing can subdue. To his own ideal he clings with unswerving fidelity. When he "rests in perfect humility," when he "burns with pure love," Calvin or Swedenborg has nothing to teach him. He feels that before the immense possibilities of the human race and of every individual soul, the greatest men the world has known shrink into nothing. He laments that even a Jesus should be "confounded with virtue and the possible of man." This prophet has a stern independence, though he speaks in gentle accents and his bearing is meek. In this union of meekness and courage, of freedom and reverence, of an eager acceptance of the heritage of the past and a conviction that greater things belong to the future, of faith in an all-pervading Deity and a sense of the reality of human life and the responsibility of man, we have a most striking example of the harmonious union of the modern spirit with the noblest teachings of ancient times.

In India the influence of Emerson has been deeply felt by many of those who have received Western education. It would be well if his influence extended to larger numbers. But the loftier the aims of the teacher, the smaller the band of disciples; and many, it must be admitted, are repelled by the peculiarities of Emerson's style. At a time when Western ideas have such a fascination for us, we need the aid of such teachers in discriminating between what is wholesome and what is hurtful in them. He is one of those wise men who, while they have amply participated in the intellectual activity of their day, have resisted and rebuked its vices and follies, and who have contributed in a large measure to its noblest moral and spiritual tendencies. Amidst the perplexities created by the conflict of the past and the present, of the East and the West, he is a safe guide; and amidst the depressing influences of life he is an unfailing source of strength and inspiration.

The invaluable service that Emerson renders to us is that he recalls us from the vanities of life to its abiding realities. His power as a spiritual teacher lies mainly in the fact that every word he utters comes from his inmost heart, and he is himself loyal to the high ideal he sets before others. He awakened noble intellectual aspirations in others by his pen and voice; and he was himself gifted with a powerful intellect and a deeply thoughtful mind which were consecrated to study and high thinking. He said that love is the affirmative of affirmatives, and no man had a more tender heart than he. He was full of boundless hope for the future of the human race and of every individual soul. He was guided and inspired by unfaltering faith in the divine goodness and beauty; he was cheered by steady hope; and his was a love which, while it flowed freely forth on all sides, was in the intimate relationships of life tremulous with emotion tender as woman's.

Carlyle would often send across the Atlantic to his illustrious friend the brief but significant query, "Watchman, what sayest thou?" Next to seeking counsel of God, we cannot do better than turn to such a watchman, and ask him in all seriousness, "What sayest thou?"

THE ETHICS OF JESUS AND THE MODERN MIND[1]

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Many times during the past half-century the question raised by Strauss, "Are we still Christian?" has been asked by other persons. The vast changes in thought which have taken place within this period have led to this. The difference between the ancient and modern thought-worlds are numerous, far-reaching, and now acutely felt. We live in a universe infinite in extent, eternal in duration, dynamic in all its elements, law-abiding in all its forces and areas, developing through an immanent process of evolution by resident forces, and moving on to a far-off divine event when the purposes of God will be realized in a perfected humanity.

Our fathers, on the other hand, lived in a world recent in the date of its origin, small in extent, and made by fiat; its laws statutes to be set aside at the pleasure of its maker; its nature deranged by the sin of man; the historic process degenerative; and its end catastrophic.

It is these differences in world-view which have made many persons ask the question, "Are we still Christian?" Have we not broken connection with the past, and even with the Christ who cherished the ancient world-view? Has there not come about a discontinuity in thought? Does not this break in thought involve also a discontinuity in faith? Can the spiritual content of the old world-view be separated from its framework of thought? Can the soul of faith survive the passing of this corruptible body of thought? To these crucial questions, some give negative answers, and confess that they can no longer call themselves Christians; they no longer consider themselves as maintaining the continuity of thought with the Christ of history.

[1] Address at the opening of the academic year at Andover Theological Seminary and Harvard Divinity School, September 29, 1911.

Others, however, answer in the affirmative. They admit that they no longer hold to the ancient world of the church and of the Bible, but they still maintain vital continuity with all the profound things of the Christian faith. When they think of the nature of the ultimate reality in which the universe and humanity are grounded, from which they both come and to which they move; when they reason concerning the purpose of the ultimate reality for the universe and humanity; and when, still further, they consider the moral character of this ultimate reality, then they find themselves thinking the thoughts of Jesus after him. They interpret the nature of this reality in the terms of personality, its character in the terms of Christlikeness, its purposes in the terms of the divine kingdom. They are conscious of their fellowship of thought with the master in these supreme matters of life. In all that concerns the inner and intensive meaning and worth of the world and man and God they trace the continuity. However much they may differ in their thought with respect to the outer or extensive meaning of these realities through their knowledge of the researches of science, the vast human material of historic study, and the deep ponderings and comprehensive views of philosophy, nevertheless they only come to the true secret of things when their thoughts concerning the heart of reality are the truths of the mind of Jesus. Discontinuity concerning the framework of the world there must be, but continuity with respect to the ultimate realities there can be and there is.

There is, however, another group of men who are not so ready to give either a positive or negative reply to these questions. Their minds are in suspense; they are not so certain in their doubts as the one group, nor so sure in their faith as the other. They are not an inconsiderable number in our day; they are found inside as well as outside the churches, and their condition creates a serious situation, and one to the help of which the Christian thinker must come.

In view of this crisis in matters of faith we are urged by some men to abandon the ground of faith and go over entirely to the field of conduct, and to invite to meet with us there all sorts and conditions of minds, irrespective of their faith in, or interpre-

tation of, the ultimate realities of life. It is claimed that this procedure would not only be the strategic thing to do, but the right thing, since the Christian religion moves wholly in the region of the ethical.

This invitation ignores, I fear, very important matters. It is not quite fair to the men whose difficulties are with matters of faith to ask them to forget the same and go over to the region of practical interests. These very interests have no great value, if the foundations of faith are insecure. Nor does Christianity move wholly in the region of the ethical. It is primarily a faith, and its ethics grows out of its faith. Then, too, it ignores the fact that there is at present scarcely any more agreement in matters of Christian ethics than in matters of the Christian faith. The question, "Are we still Christian?" is now raised concerning the ethics of Jesus no less than the faith of Jesus. Yesterday men outside as well as those inside the churches were in practical agreement on Christian ethics as giving us the great regulative principles for the guidance of our life. Even Mill, while he thought Christian morality somewhat defective because of its negative character, yet maintained that in the Golden Rule we have a principle which is adequate for all practical purposes of conduct. And while Matthew Arnold criticised the doctrine of the Incarnation of Christ, he highly commended as a practical rule of life the Imitation of Christ.

The situation, however, in these matters has greatly changed in recent years. The Christian moral ideal itself is now called in question. Next to the question concerning the faith of Jesus, the most crucial question now raised with respect to the Christian religion is that which asks whether or not we have broken with the moral ideal, not only of the churches of our own faith and order, or of the historic church, or of the apostles, but also with the moral ideal of Jesus himself.

The question is asked, Is it possible to live according to the ethical demands of Jesus? Can these demands be realized in our modern world? Would not the sincere and earnest effort to practise them involve our whole social structure in ruins? Would it not bring about the end of our civilization? Indeed

the question is raised whether we ought to live in accordance with these teachings. If they contradict our experience, if they would involve such destructive consequences, if they would necessitate our abandonment of the very world we have been hard at work building up, ought we to try to put them into effect?

These questions are raised by ethical students, who take into consideration the evolution of morals and the nature of morality, by publicists who labor for the highest national welfare, by social workers whose sympathies are deep and wide and whose consciences are quick to social demands, and no less by New Testament scholars who have returned to the sources of the Christian moral ideal and studied it historically rather than confessionally. These questions are not only live questions; they are the life-question of the Christian religion. They find expression in popular periodicals as well as in technical journals and scholarly books. This situation is particularly true of Germany, to a lesser degree it exists in England, and it will soon be acute with us.

There must be an attempt to hold the Christian moral ideal in the full light of the ethical thought of our own day and generation, and there must be an inner unity of mind, if we would live at peace and have power. We are persuaded that the kind of allegiance Jesus demands is a loyalty based on the conviction that his fundamental moral claims are reasonable and just. If it were necessary, it would be better to differ from him conscientiously than to agree with him conventionally.

Let us then in the first place observe where the apparent, if not real, break comes between the modern mind and the ethical demands of Jesus. It is primarily in the different attitudes taken towards the world and the worth of the present life. The following contrasts are set forth and emphasized.

The first contrast concerns the necessity and importance of the economic conditions of our earthly life. These have their justification in their nature and in the part they play in the advancing civilization of the world. The richer, fuller life of culture is largely conditioned by these economic values. Wealth therefore has its place, and foresight is a virtue.

Now when we go into the gospels, and read there the teach-

ings of Jesus concerning these matters, we cannot but note the contrast. We learn that we are not to lay up treasures upon the earth; we are to take no thought for the morrow; the chief emphasis falls upon the dangers of wealth; the struggle for existence and all that it involves is not recognized. It is maintained by some that life in our world is impossible on these terms.

Again, we have a high appreciation of the heritage of civilization. We take keen interest in science, in its pursuit of knowledge, and in its pushing further into the confines of the unknown. We delight in the beautiful, and find deep joy in the ministry of art. We gird up our loins and light our lamps for the strenuous task of philosophic interpretation of the meaning of our world. We know the strength of the bonds of friendship, and feel the inspiration of another's confidence, and share in the common joys of life.

Now when we read the gospels, we find to our delight that there is some appreciation of these high values of culture on the part of Jesus. He stands near to us in his appreciation of the beauty of the flowers of the field, in his keen interest in the processes of growth, in his poetic productions in the form of parables, and in his friendly intercourse with human beings. And yet the surprise comes that there is no full recognition of these ends of life as parts and factors in the kingdom, and that no ethical instructions are given the disciples concerning them. They appear to play no important part in Jesus' thought, nor to have any essential place in the kingdom.

Still further. We are believers in the positive life. We love the heroic, and we are aggressive. We want to express ourselves, to realize the possibilities of our nature, and to prove true to our individualities. Self-realization is the end we set before ourselves. We want to be something. We have little sympathy with the desire to be nothing. And we go in for the strenuous thing. We desire to test our physical prowess and moral capacity. We like the task that counts for something in the life of the world and in the progress of civilization. The morality that appeals to us is the morality of masters, the morality of power, control, progress.

Now when we read the ethical demands of the gospels, we find considerable emphasis on the negative and the passive, self-denial, renunciation, non-resistance, turning the other cheek, giving the other garment also: these are the strange notes we hear. We have here apparently the morality of the "weak brother." Nietzsche calls it the morality of slaves.

Then, too, we have a growing social consciousness and conscience. Our social interest in men is not merely sympathetic, it is also righteous. We are interested in them not only as victims of our social order, or of the tyranny of the strong, but also interested in them as men who have a right to be treated with respect, and who deserve that the causes of the wrongs they suffer be remedied. The least of the children of men have a right to participate in the blessings of civilization. The fruits of culture are not for the few. And we are concerned more and more with the social causes of human misery. We must try to catch the thieves who waylay the man who travels from Jerusalem to Jericho, as well as take care of the victim of their wrongs, that we have to do today. We demand and work for radical social changes. Ours is a democratic morality, touched with the spirit of revolution.

In the noble sympathy of the gospels, so pure in its source and so genuine in its expression and so broad in its reach, there is full agreement between the ethics of Jesus and the modern conscience. It is, however, at the points of the social causes of wrongs that the difference arises. The personal rather than the social is the distinctive note of the ethical teaching of Jesus, and personal sympathy is emphasized rather than social wrongs. And the brotherhood contemplated is one selected out of the world rather than a world-redemption itself.

Once more, we are optimistic in our outlook upon the world. We find resident forces at work in the historic processes that bid us hope and be of good cheer. We are believers in progress. The idea of revolution has taken possession of our minds. It is our regulative idea. The past is interpreted by it; and the future is confidently awaited, and is expected to follow the same laws. This is the mood in which men now do their work in the world.

That there is an optimism in the gospels is undoubted, but it

concerns the kingdom of God, the transcendent good, rather than the world. The outlook on this world is pessimistic enough. It is in the bondage of sin. It is in the power of the devil. The earth-forces are evil. There are no latent sources, nor resources, in them for their recovery and for the victory of the good. The only hope for the world is beyond the world. It is in the apocalyptic, catastrophic coming of the kingdom. The mood is eschatological.

This non-worldly, transcendent, ethical teaching of Jesus is explained in various ways.

There is, first of all, the "*zeitgeschichtliche*," or historical, explanation. Jesus belonged to another civilization than ours. He lived in a pre-capitalistic age; he passed his days in a small town; he lived as a member of a subject race, in a corner of the world, into which, however, with the soldiers and traders came something of the spirit of the great outside world. Corresponding to this historical situation in which Jesus lived, his gospel was idyllic. It was beautiful, and adapted to its day and its place. It was the gospel of the poor. Its ethical directions contemplate life under such conditions. Not one of them is out of place in such circumstances. They are feasible, they are obligatory, indeed they were realized by the disciples. Were our conditions the same today, they would have the same relevancy; and they have relevancy just in so far as they are similar, as in our personal relations in small circles.

Our civilization, however, is very different. We live in a capitalistic era and our modern states are world-powers; the struggle for existence on the part of men is intense; the necessity for great and strong states, ultimately based on force, is inevitable; the existence of these states requires equipment for possible, and indeed inevitable, wars. For such states, and for citizenship in them, and for economic success, the ethical demands of Jesus have no force, his ethical teaching no relevancy. This is the position maintained by Friedrich Naumann, and this is the explanation he gives for the character of Jesus' ethics, and for the necessity he is under to have recourse to another ethical standard for his life in the modern state.

Another explanation offered is in the terms of the eschato-

logical expectation of Jesus. The reason that Jesus gave such ethical directions concerning laying up treasures in heaven rather than on earth, carelessness concerning the morrow, non-resistance toward wrong-doers, and even love for our enemy, was that he expected the end of the world to come shortly. When one expects the end to come soon, he can fulfil all these requirements. This we find in the conduct of persons who time and again throughout the whole course of history have expected the speedy end of the world. So also in the case of the early Christians, instructed by St. Paul, and no less in the case of the disciples instructed by Jesus. His demands were to get ready for the end. This was the great positive requirement. The negative requirements were in view of the same event. The positive and the negative ethical conduct was the expression of the disposition engendered by this hope.

This is an explanation of the ethical demands of Jesus in the terms of an "eschatological interim ethics," set forth by Johannes Weiss in 1900 in *Die Predigt Jesu vom Reiche Gottes*, later reaffirmed in his New Testament commentary, also by Ehrhard in *Der Grundcharakter der Ethik Jesu*, and more recently by Schweitzer in his work, *Von Reimarus zu Wrede*. This is the position held by many of the younger German theologians, by modernists like Loisy and Tyrrell, and by many others in England. The eschatological interpretation of the teaching of Jesus has had some influence on scholars, who, however, while conceding that some ethical demands and directions of Jesus may be explained in this way, yet hold that the fundamental ethical teaching of Jesus is not determined by this idea. Nor is the eschatological idea true to the facts when it is made the regnant idea in the mind of Jesus. This is the position held notably by the New Testament scholar Dobschütz, and by the theologian and moralist Herrmann.

The third explanation is given in the terms of the fundamental philosophy of Jesus' life and teaching, in the terms of the religion of redemption. At this point we shall only suggest the line of thought, and shall return to it later. This explanation is based on Jesus' estimate of the ultimate values of life. Here is the fundamental contrast of an immanent-world ethics, and of a

transcendent ethics. The question is, In what are we to find our highest good? in the things of earth or in the things of heaven? in the values of culture or in the values of religion? in the relativities of life or in the absolutes? in things and human beings or in God? In which of these series are we to find our deepest and most enduring satisfaction? In which of them are we to come to the fullest realization of our powers and possibilities? For Jesus the ultimate values of life were the great values; in these men were to find their enduring satisfaction and highest realization. His ethics, therefore, is fundamentally transcendent: this character of his ethics cannot be ignored, nor must it be minimized in the interest of any easy solution of our problem of keeping continuity with the moral ideal of Jesus.

Let us observe now the various historic attitudes taken toward these contrasts between the ethical demands of Jesus and the demands of life in the world.

There is first the apostolic. The first followers of Jesus naturally took the same attitude as their master. For them these contrasts did not really exist. They did not create for them a problem. Like their master, they expected the speedy end of the world. Their ethics was of men awaiting the great change. The great values were those pertaining to the kingdom of God about to be established. The things of earth paled in the splendor of the heavenly light of the eternal world. Their citizenship was not on the earth but in heaven; they were subjects of no temporal order, but only of the eternal realm. Their conduct therefore was determined by this hope. Even the closest relation of life, the marriage of two human beings, might well be renounced in view of the situation.

The problem of life here in the world began, however, to make its appearance in consequence of the deferred coming of the Lord. The economic necessity of work, of earning a livelihood, of having means to help the destitute Christians, made itself felt, and Paul demanded that men should work.

The sub-apostolic church was forced to recognize these contrasts in the teaching of Jesus and the necessities of life in the world. The long-deferred consummation, and the gradual fading

of the hope of the Lord's coming at all, created the problem of taking some new attitude towards the world. They were face to face with new situations. They had to live in the world; they had to earn their living; they had to relate themselves to the various callings and tasks of life; they had to take some part in the general social life of the world. Serious ethical questions began to be discussed: how far could Christians, in loyalty still to their religious convictions, lay up treasures on the earth, support the state based on force, take up service in the army, avail themselves of the comforts and luxuries? And, still further, came the question, How participate in the life of the world for its transformation? Here arises in all earnestness the problem with which the church and Christians have been confronted ever since, and before which we find ourselves today.

The attitude of the church in the middle ages, which is still that maintained by the Roman Catholic church, was one of compromise. It held to the non-worldly, transcendent ethics of the gospels and of the early church. The true and higher Christian life centred all its thought and interest on the eternal world and its values. The negative attitude was taken towards the world. Separation from it was necessary. The ideal of the perfect life was the monkish. The priests and nuns were the genuine Christians. They lived on a higher plane than others. They were the persons loyal to the strict ethical demands of Jesus. They were his uncompromising followers. However, all could not be priests and nuns; the common mass of people had still to live in the world, do their day's work, earn their living, build their homes, hold society together, and maintain the church itself, and make for a Christian civilization. But this life was regarded as on a lower level; it involved compromise with the world: it necessitated either the abandonment or the deferred fulfilment of the non-worldly ethical demands of Jesus. Thus two standards of morality were not only recognized by the church, but taught and established by it. On the whole, this is still the position maintained by the Catholic church and its ethical teachers.

In the Protestant attitude a break was made with this double standard of morality. It could not tolerate the outer and inner

division involved in this compromise-ethics. There was not only the recognition of the necessity and legitimacy of the vocations of life, but their justification and inculcation. The common man and woman at their tasks in the home or field or store or public office were as highly appreciated as the cloistered monk and nun. Their contribution to the church and the life of the world was more valuable. The service of God was not simply and solely in worship, but also in work, not only in the church, but in the home and society.

Not only the relations of the earthly life, but also the organizations and institutions, were fully recognized and highly appreciated. The state had its functions to fulfil, and society its life to develop and enrich, and civilization its place in relation to the kingdom of God.

It is true that much of Catholicism came over into Protestantism in matters both of dogma and of morals. The recognition of these "earth-tasks" was somewhat defective: Luther and Calvin grounded their justification more on the Old Testament than on the teachings of Jesus, and where the teaching of Jesus was followed, it was taken more as a precept than as a principle; the problem involved in keeping continuity with Christ was not clearly seen nor deeply felt; and their thought of life in the world and its tasks wavered between a pessimistic and optimistic conception; indeed both were under the influence of the Roman Catholic depreciation of the world.

These contradictions are clearly manifest in the movements which have continued these principles and influences. Thus in Pietism we find the non-worldly attitude taken towards life and the cultural values of civilization. Individual piety and separation from the world are its characteristic notes. And even in Puritanism, while there is a true recognition of the state and its great tasks, and a noble insistence upon social righteousness, yet the negative attitude is strong, and the danger imminent that Puritanism become puritanic.

The more positive side of the Reformation, its better appreciation of the goods of life, came to expression in the thought of Schleiermacher, who found in the state and culture the ethically indispensable elements in the good that God wills for his children,

and of Rothe, who regarded the state rather than the church as at once the nobler and larger factor and sphere for the realization of the will of God.

In the present situation relative to this problem there is, first of all, the attitude which frankly, though sadly, confesses the fact of a break with Jesus and the necessity for it, and the acceptance of another ethics than the Christian, relative to all the worldly tasks of life. These tasks have their own ethical necessities and justification and therefore have a right to make their moral demands upon us. Morality is not only grounded in human nature, but it is conditioned for its growth, and has sanction, only as it represents the actual stage which it has reached in its development. Since the world has entered upon its capitalistic era the ethics adapted to it and demanded by it is not one growing out of and suited to a pre-capitalistic era. In all matters therefore that concern the struggle for existence, the economic situation, the building of a great state, we must not look to Christ for direction, but rather to the ethics which belongs to our civilization. This is the position of Naumann, who is significant not from a scholarly point of view, but from the popular, since he has a large influence and expresses pretty accurately the mind of the average man engaged in public life. He says very frankly: "We do not question Jesus when things are concerned which belong in the region of economic and state construction. . . . I vote for the German navy, not because I am a Christian, but because I am a citizen, and because I have learned to renounce looking for fundamental questions of state in the Sermon on the Mount."

On the other hand, we find men who take literally the ethical demands of Jesus in all their sharp non-worldly transcendent meaning. The ethical directions of Jesus, whether spoken to one person or to a group, whether as incidental or fundamental, are taken for infallible guidance for our lives in our infinitely more complex situations. Poverty is accepted, non-resistance is practised, oaths are abjured, even family ties are renounced, and the world with all its fruits of culture is contemned. The great, world-famous representative of this attitude was Tolstoi.

It is not without meaning that, as Naumann comes out of lib-

eral Protestantism, so Tolstoi came out of Greek Catholicism; the one out of a vigorous nation of the west, and the other out of a variously mixed nation of the east. Tolstoi was in revolt against a church and state which press hard on new manifestations of life and efforts at freedom. In this sense his ethics is that of revolt, and yet the hold of the traditional and the authoritative is still strong upon him. He would be free from the dogmatic moral prescriptions of his state and church only to be bound by the ethical prescriptions of Jesus. By his new obedience he would involve the whole state structure and social fabric in ruins: he is a religious and ethical anarchist, the counterpart of the philosophical anarchists who come largely from the same country, and from like situations elsewhere.

The significant and worthful thing, however, in Tolstoi is that he has been able to free himself from the entangling alliances of state and church, and to return from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries into the first century, and find and face the historic Jesus. He certainly moved in the right direction when he entered the gospels. He found it better to break with modern life than to break with Jesus. He would solve our problem by ignoring and abandoning one of the elements which create it.

Neither in the one nor in the other of these attitudes have others been able to find the solution of our problem. They do not feel compelled, with Naumann, to break with Jesus in their life in this world; nor on the other hand, with Tolstoi, to break with the moral situations of modern life and the ethical demands made upon them therein. These men are ready to make many concessions, but they do not feel compelled to make any compromise on the fundamental principles of life which Jesus announces. They allow that these several contrasts, if not so sharp as represented, are nevertheless very real; that the eschatological idea does shape and color some of the ethical demands of Jesus, though it does not explain nor vitiate this ethical ideal; that we cannot imitate the example of Jesus in our complex world in matters of detail, though we can in the greater matters of his spirit in all our relations; that we cannot go to him for ethical instructions on our manifold new tasks, nor should we think to find such for our situation, and yet that we must go to

him still for the fundamental principles of moral life. Differences there are between the men who represent this third attitude, but they are more incidental than fundamental. The two most influential theologians in Germany at present, Herrmann and Troeltsch, illustrate these differences and agreements. The former narrows the sphere of the ethical more than the latter; it covers a smaller area, and the vocations and cultural values of life and civilization are more negatively estimated. Troeltsch recognizes more than Herrmann the moral necessities of life in the world, appreciates more highly cultural values, and finds them more deeply grounded. In short, his ethics is more immanent than Herrmann's. Greater than their differences, however, are their agreements in holding that in the ethics of Jesus we find the deepest principles of life, and that, as a matter of faith, we can cherish the conviction that these principles will be finally realized in the life of man. In this third attitude, with these differences and agreements, here more and there less, are to be classed the greater names of German theology.

Let us now consider the lines of thought which promise a solution of our problem.

It is of fundamental importance that we recognize that the Christian religion is the religion not of law but of the spirit, and that the ethical characteristic of this religion of the spirit is its demand for, and creation of, an autonomous moral life.

The religion of law was overcome in principle by Jesus. He ushered in the religion of the spirit. This religion is not burdened, as was the Jewish religion, with manifold ethical precepts for the guidance of conduct down to the minutest matters of dietetics and hygiene. Nor is it bound to a given stage of social development by fixing its institutions and customs, as in Islam. Some incidental instructions, particular precepts for the guidance of certain persons in given situations, are found in the Christian religion with its ethical teaching, it is true, but these are not its distinctive features, and they are certainly not its fundamental principles. Even the Golden Rule is not a rule, but rather a spirit, and even the law of love is not so much a law as an inner,

pure, and permanent disposition. And the followers whom Jesus sought were not like soldiers, whose duty it is:

> "Theirs not to reason why,
> Theirs not to make reply,
> Theirs but to do and die."

He sought for convinced followers, men whose minds no less than their hearts were in his service. He did not demand imitators of his outward life, but followers of his own free, autonomous spirit. He did not make himself a substitute conscience for men. They were to judge for themselves what was the right. It is true that he quickened and illuminated the consciences of men, and made men free from sin, and from moral and religious confusions of righteousness; and consequently men's judgment of what was right was truer and keener and quicker and saner than before they came under his influence. This indeed came about as a result of their experience of redemption, wrought in their souls by his life and death. He won them for God, for the ultimate things and values and realities of life, and this was at once the condition and the cause of their new conscience.

What Jesus sought, therefore, to accomplish for men, and what he consequently demanded of men, was that their conscience might be illumined and emancipated. They must be able and free to judge for themselves, under his ethical leadership, the great matters of life, as occasions arose and new situations demanded. He did not set himself up as the great casuist of perplexed consciences, but rather as the creator of autonomous consciences. He did in the realm of ethics what he did in the region of church polity: he left men free for their tasks. As in the one case he created spiritual life, which produced the church, but left to the occasion and to the men the kind of church to be organized, and the method of its administration; so also in the other case he created the conscience which was free to determine for itself the right conduct in the given situations of life. As we have learned that worldliness does not consist in the things we seek and use, but in the spirit in which we use them and the purpose to which we put them, so also must we learn that it is the spirit of our life that determines the moral character of our

conduct. There is no real morality that is not autonomous. There is no real free conscience that is not able to determine its course in the world. Jesus did not increase the ethical precepts and principles of life; he reduced them practically to one, the principle or spirit of love. And even this one great moral principle of personal conduct he derived from the new life in the soul in its relation to the ultimate reality of the universe, the Moral God.

The first great moral unification which Jesus created was that of the inner life: the unity of the disposition, the heart united to do its moral tasks, the will master of its impulses and passions and powers, quick to do the behests of duty, and moving out from the centre of its inner life in all directions.

And Jesus set this moral personality, with its autonomous morality, growing out of its new divine life, in the midst of the greater human realities of life. Moral personalities are the great ethical realities. Human beings are the highest moral values of life. Persons, not things, are the ends of conduct. Things find their highest uses in relation to men. They get their value through their social ministry. The economic necessities are necessities because men need them for their life here in the world. The state is founded because human beings have social needs which grow out of their social nature. Cultural values are produced by men, and highly appreciated for their services in the enrichment of life. The institutions of society are established for their social worth and utility. It is man who is the great creator of cultural values. And he is the object of their existence. And he is at the same time the standard by which they are judged. Man is not made for the Sabbath but the Sabbath is made for man, and in like manner the industrial régime, the state, the cultural values, and the whole human world are made for man.

Now it is into right relation with these moral personalities that Jesus sets a man, and contemplates placing each and all. The redeemed man looks out upon the world, and all that he does is done from the inner disposition of love. This leads him to recover the personality of others, to have an enthusiasm for all sorts and conditions of men, to cherish an unconquerable faith

in them, to devote himself to them, and to make any sacrifice to recover them to God, to establish relations of brotherhood, and to make love supreme in their conduct.

It is this new interest in men that determines conduct toward them. This conduct varies with changing conditions: new social situations create new duties, but the disposition of love and the final purpose of conduct in the creation of a moral fellowship remain dominant and regulative through all these changes. They determine the thing to be done in any given situation and at any historic moment in the progress of civilization.

Then, too, we must observe that Jesus' moral demands bring men face to face with the ultimate moral reality of the universe. His morality makes its transcendent demands because the fundamental facts of life necessitate and justify them. Men are set in a moral order that is more ultimate than their desires and their consciences. Their lives are grounded in the eternal reality. They derive their being therefrom; they come with endowments from its wealth; they are placed under an authority that is beyond their caprice; they are called to co-operate in a purpose that expresses the will of the eternal as the goal of all men; they are at once the factors through which and the sphere in which this ultimate moral reality finds expression and realization. In brief, they are the children of God, in and through whom the purposes of the heavenly Father are to be fulfilled.

It is this profound religious conviction that is the deepest thing in the life of Jesus, and the most fundamental truth in his thought. It is life in God, and with God, and for God, and out from God, that we find in all its glory and wonder in the life of Jesus. It is this reality of his religion that gives its deepest principle to his ethics, and makes it distinctively religious and fundamentally transcendent. It places man at the centre of moral reality. All that he does, he does in God and out from God. He no longer stands at the circumference of life, moving towards the centre; but rather at the centre of life moving out towards the circumference. If in his religion he goes through nature and man to God, in his moral life he goes from God to the world and man. This is the dialectic of the Christian moral movement.

And since the God with whom he stands in right personal rela-

tion of love in the Christian religion is the reality in whom all beings find their lives, and from whom they derive their nature, and by whom they are placed in the world and set in social relations, the moral ideal binds a man to the whole of life. It is not an isolated, solitary, individualistic God with whom he has to do, but the God of love, who cherishes a supreme purpose and good for the world, who takes interest in every human being and rules in the affairs of nations, and makes all things new.

If we are thus placed in right relation with God, this relation involves a proper attitude towards the world and man. Whatever interests, therefore, we believe to be divine, whatever the moral situations in which we find ourselves and which we recognize as providential, whatever social good we see is necessary for the progress of the race, these become for us the moral task of life.

This therefore makes Christian ethics transcendent in its supreme good, ultimate in its sources, fundamental in its bases, authoritative in its claims, contemporary in its demands, and progressive in its character.

Now our estimate of the worth of given cultural values, and our attitude towards them, must be determined by our recognition of these fundamental moral realities of the universe: the greatness of our own personalities, the reverent and loving attitude towards all other personalities, and our highest weal in right relations with God. By their service or disservice to these realities are the things of the world to be judged.

This involves the spirit of detachment in our relation to all these things. We must maintain our freedom in our relation to them. Not things but the man must be in the saddle. Man must ever be the master. He must be able to live with these things or without them. He must know, as the great Apostle did, how to abound and how to be abased, and in the one condition as in the other enjoy contentment of soul. He must see the necessity for the attitude demanded by the master: the readiness to renounce all these values if the moral situation demands it. He must respond to the heroic appeal: to count the interests of God of greater value, and their right to his life of renunciation. In times of national crises we recognize

the truth of this position, but there is no time without its crisis for the moral life, and certainly our age demands this spirit of detachment and this spirit of heroism. For, as Professor James once said, our greatest fear is the fear of poverty. And Kipling gave wise counsel to young men when he said: "Fear the man who has no love of money. He is the dangerous man in a mammonistic age." Not only Jesus but every great soul has appealed to men to cherish the spirit of detachment from the lesser values of life.

And it involves the recognition of all these values, the lowest and the highest of them, as subordinate ends, and in their measure means to the one great divine end of the kingdom of God. They have their own ethical value: this must be recognized; their worth must not be disparaged; their place in life must not be scorned. And yet they gain their greater value, and have their deeper significance, in relation to the supreme end for which all things exist: the final purpose of God. When the lesser values clash with the higher,—when the good is the enemy of the better,—then they must be renounced. The kingdom of God has the right of way in a man's life, in society, in history. When the interests of the kingdom demand it, sacrifice of everything,—wealth, position, domestic ties, even life itself, must be made. The servants of the kingdom in every age and land are cross-bearers.

We observe, once more, that the modern mind has sore need of all the rigor of the transcendent demands that Christian ethics makes.

The grave defect of our age is that, in its ambition for the possession of wealth and its passion for power, it pays little or no attention to the means it uses, nor to the methods it employs. The ethics of the natural process, if the word ethics may be allowed here, is taken over into the human world. The use of power in the securing of ends is a characteristic, not only of our subjugation of nature, but also in our subjugation of men. Not only is the resort to force the last resort of men; it is also the first. The will to power exercises force on its way to gain its end. It is characteristic of our industrial régime, our military system, our social tyranny, and the recrudescence of sav-

agery in lawless outbreaks. A morality that is deeper grounded than the natural process and that is better established than human laws is required for the restraint of men from wrong, and for the achievement of the freedom of mastery in the right.

And a greater good than these goods is required for the satisfaction of life. There is a struggle for the possession of things, which when got do not satisfy. Not in things, nor even in the higher values of culture, nor even in our human relationships, can we find the permanent satisfaction of our lives. Never were more men in possession of wealth than now, never were so many men persons of privilege in having the advantages of a liberal education, and never were our human relationships larger than at present. And yet there is a strange dissatisfaction in the lives of men and women in our day. There are abundant outer resources for pleasure, meagre inner resources of happiness. The psalmist's words are strangely and sadly true of our day: "The Lord gave them their requests, but sent leanness into their soul." There is a poverty of the inner life, which is very different from the poverty of spirit. The age is not rich towards God, though it has abundance of things. And its enduring satisfaction can only come from its ethical wealth, and its peace be found by living at the centre of reality with God.

Finally, it is in Christian ethics that we are to find an adequate dynamic. The higher the ideal, the greater must the dynamic be. If the ideal of our age is not so high as the Christian, yet, even for the realization of its own ideal, the age needs a greater dynamic than its own provides. It is not able to realize its own immanent, this-world ethics. It cannot get men to live for its interests, to devote themselves to its causes, to sacrifice all for its earthly kingdom. It confesses that the forces of economic necessity, human passion, and selfishness are too much for it. And the very forces it has developed, the Frankenstein it has built, it has not the ability to direct. The demand is for moral power to control economic and political forces and to raise men to a higher moral level. For the realization of these lesser ends, to say nothing of the Supreme End, there must be some resource for men of today deeper and stronger than economic

necessities, higher and wiser than human wills, and more permanent than the passing generations. Christian ethics brings with it the power adequate for the realization not only of the lesser ends, but also of the one supreme end, the kingdom of God. Thus in the deep matters of faith and in the fundamental principles of the moral life, we trace the continuity between ourselves and Jesus, our Master.

THE CRITICAL PROBLEM OF THEOLOGY TODAY: THE PROBLEM OF METHOD

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I

Systematic Theology used to be the acknowledged Queen of the Sciences, exacting allegiance and tribute in every district of human thought. By one of those cataclysmic upheavals of thought that now and then disturb society, the situation has been radically altered. The queen has been dethroned. Surveying this wrecked glory and these emblems of departed power, the faithful speak of a rebellion; the philosopher thinks of it as a revolution; the man of science calls it evolution.

Traditionalist, philosopher, or scientist, we all know that the present situation is enigmatical. So far as systematic theology is concerned, "there hath passed away a glory from the earth." What is the significance of the changing order? There are differing degrees and kinds of glory. Has theology passed its zenith with the glory that has failed? Or is the present situation but a temporary eclipse? Are we to mount higher in the scale of glory when we emerge from the shadow cast by the ascendant star of science?

More concretely said, the coming of an age of science, with its new way of regarding the world, its new methods of explanation, its new spirit of independence and power, its new ideals of life, has disturbed the old order. The upheaval has been profound, and the presuppositions upon which traditional theology built its fortresses are today largely discredited or under suspicion. The result is seen and felt in far-reaching confusion in the realm of religious explanation, and in the universal effort at adjustment. Since theology and religion reciprocally influence each other, the result has been a wave of uncertainty or depression in the field of practical religion. The appeal of the Christian ministry for young men of ambition has waned; the authority of the pulpit

has suffered; the hold of the church upon society has weakened, —with the result of a vacillating moral and religious consciousness. Robust ethics and conquering ideals are achieved in the atmosphere of confidence and conviction. An age of hesitation and confusion in the things of the spirit does not best minister to moral fibre and world-defying, world-conquering confidence. This general estimate of the present situation as having its roots, partly at least, in the confusion of religious explanation, will serve as a practical apology for offering an analytical discussion of the state of Systematic Theology.

If there were space for it, the situation might be made much clearer by an historical review of the rise, rule, and decline of systematic theology, with a study of the causes for the decline. We may safely start, however, with the assumption that the fortunes of theology are at low-ebb tide today, and with the other assumption, which I think the whole history justifies, namely, that the weakness of the situation, the cause of the decline, lies in the inadequate conception of the task and method of theology which controls the makers of theology. If we can set ourselves right here, gaining a somewhat definite and tenable conception of our task, we shall be prepared for fruitful work in theology. For fallacious conceptions and, above all, confused conceptions of our task are current in theological circles today. The confusion of the theologian is reflected in some form in the whole Christian church.

In speaking of art and artists, John Ruskin observes that "failure is less frequently attributable to either insufficiency of means or impatience of labor, than to a confused understanding of the thing actually to be done." [1] A confused understanding of the thing to be done! That is the key to the present Babel of opinions. What are we trying to do? What is our task, and what are its limitations; and what the best method of approaching our task? Sabatier says, "To the thinking man a discord between methods is a graver matter than an opposition between doctrines." [2] The insight of that pregnant sentence ought to be

[1] Introduction to the Seven Lamps of Architecture.

[2] The opening sentence of his book, The Religions of Authority and the Religion of the Spirit.

the possession of every theological thinker. The discord between theologies today, the discord between science and theology, between traditional theology and modern theology, the discord of the church trying to find its strength, of the individual trying to recover his faith,—what is it but the discord of method, the discord of confused conceptions of what we are trying to do? It may be that the theological battle will continue; but even so let us stop the petty guerilla warfare about petty things and fight in the open for our deepest insights, out of which are the issues of life.

The seriousness of the discord of method lies in the fact that the debate is not carried on at the point of fundamental disagreement.[3] The real difference between the disputants may be the irreconcilable differences of clashing philosophies and of fundamental conceptions of method. The opposing champions may be controlled by presuppositions which are mutually antagonistic and which do not appear in the debate. Neither party suspects the nature of the disagreement, nor the place of control. Most doctrinal debates are of this sort, and the present struggle exhibits this blindness to the real issue. Sharp rapier-thrusts and brilliant defences are futile to settle such disputes, even though one party to the encounter may give way. For the issue is between fundamentals, and all parties engaged must see the issues involved and the fundamental point of disagreement; else the crossing of swords is useless, wasteful, and bombastic. To be sure, seeing the issue is not necessarily healing the breach. But it is much to know just where and why the conflict is, even though we agree to disagree. Concrete problems must be subordinated to a study of principles. The debate then becomes rational rather than verbal. Some of the showiest debates in the history of theology have been insoluble in the terms of their formulation; but they belonged in the Theory of Knowledge, where the value of the discordant methods could have been rationally determined,

[3] In an analytical discussion of "The Old Theology and the New," in the Harvard Theological Review, January, 1911, which has appeared since this article was prepared, Professor William Adams Brown makes a similar emphasis. "All turns here on the term 'method.' The new theology is not a matter of date, but of principles."

and the true issue seen. A change of venue should have been ordered, a new tribunal. For only a better analysis of the problem of knowledge could have cleared the rational atmosphere.

The true theological issue today—the real ground of confusion—is in the matter of rational method. Recent literature is recognizing this fact, and it is a hopeful sign of the times. A significant example of this is a symposium, in a recent theological journal, by three leading theological professors, dealing with the theme, "The Task and Method of Systematic Theology." [4] Such essays will help constructive thinkers to clarify their own visions of truth and to formulate their convictions.

II

The greatest sense of discord today in the theological field is that expressed in the distinction between the traditional orthodox wing of the church on the one hand, and the modern orthodox wing on the other. By these terms are meant the older and the newer movements within the field of Christian interpretation. The main battle is in process here, and the chief confusion arises somewhere on the line where these two movements collide. It is not sufficient to brush this distinction lightly aside with the assumption that it is only a phase of the perennial clash between the conservative and the radical forces of thought. This is not wholly true; moreover, it is not specific enough. There is something distinctive about the present situation. What is the real principle of discord between traditional theology and modern theology,[5]—these terms being used to designate the general type of theological formulation which we have inherited from the past and the general type of protest and reconstruction current today?

[4] American Journal of Theology, April, 1910. The contributors to the symposium were Professor Benjamin B. Warfield of Princeton Seminary, Professor Wm. Adams Brown of Union Seminary, and Professor Gerald Birney Smith of the University of Chicago.

[5] Faithful critics have pointed out that this use of the words "modern" and "traditional" to designate the contrasted types of theological method is ambiguous. But any words are open to like criticism; and the carefully restricted definition here given to the terms ought to render them innocuous, and fairly adequate.

The comprehensive answer is that it is a fundamental "discord between methods," and not an "opposition between doctrines." More specifically said, it is the discord between the static conception of life and the world which has prevailed until far into the nineteenth century, and an evolutionary or growing conception of life and the world which holds our minds today and pervades every field of our thinking. The units of the older world of thought were conceived in rigid and fixed terms. The units of our modern thinking are elastic, growing things. The older philosophic ideal was Being; the modern philosophic ideal is Becoming.[6] The older scientific ideal was unchangeable essence; the modern scientific ideal is development as the essential nature of things. The older conception of method moved in terms of absolutes; the modern conception of method deals with relative standards.

This abstract statement of a fundamental discord of method finds concrete exemplification in every line of inquiry. For the technical student of thought it is doubtless sufficient to say that the difference that we have characterized is the difference which the discovery of the evolutionary conception and its application to life has wrought. Darwin [7] is the father of this discord. Profoundly interpreted, evolution is indeed the key to our problem; but not evolution as popularly conceived, nor evolution as an hypothesis of natural science, nor, least of all, as a philosophical dogma. Evolution as a statement of that whole radical transformation of our method of thinking which marks the emergence of modern thought is indeed the key to our total problem. But the term is likely to be only a verbal explanation, or to offer only a shallow interpretation. It is necessary therefore to characterize the far-reaching implications of the evolutionary method as a new insight into meaning, a new and pregnant principle with which thought operates in every realm.

[6] This relativity is not the "absolute relativity" of the Hegelian "becoming is the truth of being." It is not a metaphysical doctrine at all, but the recognition that we know phenomena as process. Our explanations must take account of the omnipresent fact of finite development, whatever our conception of the absolute.

[7] See, for example, Henry Jones, Idealism as a Practical Creed, pp. 24 f.

The key to the true understanding of the modern world of thought is in the hand of the man who has mastered the meaning of law, process, growth. In the field of natural science, the biological method has yielded immense fruit. The law of life is growth. Everything that lives, grows. In the field of organic life, the application of the principle is fairly clear. We study a plant or a tree in terms of its law of development. Likewise with animal life, we are concerned with the laws of growth. This is perfectly clear when applied to the individual. But natural science has carried with fruitfulness the application of the principle of growth to the groups of individuals. Our classifications into groups and species express not fixity, but development.

In the inorganic world, science is controlled by similar ideals. Geology discovers that the world itself has developed and is developing. Astronomy affirms not only a moving world, but age-long, advancing processes everywhere. This is a growing universe. The old rigidity and finality are dispelled.

But the real significance of the newer insight is not seen until the method is applied to the study of man. Man's world is a growing thing; and man himself, studied as an individual or in groups or as a genus, expresses development and not fixity. Anthropology, psychology, sociology, all deal with elastic, moving facts, not with static facts. And thus this principle of insight is brought to a man's moral world, his religious world, his rational world, and under the scrutiny of this newer method it is all seen as a moving, advancing process. Religion, whether in the race or in the individual, grows from the zero point to its best estate by a progressive process. The moral life awakens and grows from more to more. And even rationality, intelligence, thought, is everywhere an advancing fact, not a constant quantity. The effort to fix this complex, moving fact by a name, as "human nature," is delusive. We conceal the movement thus under a mental conception that seems to form a fixed point in the flux. The older, abstract units of thought about man, such as "moral agent," "responsibility," "freedom," "religion," are all seen to have fluent rather than fixed meanings in their practical application. None of these things are constant quantities, but growing. We must learn to think not only a man's objective

world, but also his subjective world,—his units of thought and the thinker himself,—as moving, growing facts, expressing a process proceeding by inviolable laws.

All of this is indeed bewildering and confusing for the lay mind, especially when viewed on the background of the old, secure, and fixed units of thought. The fountains of the great deep are broken up, and chaos seems to threaten. But the real significance for theology of this changed method is likely to be misapprehended. It is a shallow view which assumes that the real trouble with the evolutionary principle in theology is that it makes creation always a process as against the fiat-conception of Genesis. That science affirms our world and all worlds to have been evolved, while the Bible says that God created them; or that science affirms the evolution of man, while Genesis declares that God placed him ready-made in a ready-made world, this is only the fringe of the problem and really does not touch its implications. It is the thorough-going antithesis of the modern sense of the relativity of meanings to the older sense of the absoluteness of meanings which makes the situation acute. Neither party can clearly comprehend the other. It is an "irrepressible conflict" between two irreconcilable orders of thought; and to debate about doctrines across the dividing line without comprehending the underlying principle of disharmony, can only result in words, bad blood, confusion, and distrust. Confident, positive, constructive work in theology can proceed only upon a clear grasp of the situation and a deliberate adoption of the principle which actually underlies our own world of thought. Thus only can we find a real point of contact between our theology and the thinking of the people. In the present twilight-stage of the great debate many preachers and theologians simply share the confusion of their hearers, and get on by the amphibious method of breathing both atmospheres. The result is an anaemic theology, by reason of the imperfect adjustment to the old or the new. At best it is a *modus vivendi*, and theology must eventually either die or adjust itself to its environment.

Concrete illustrations of this discord between methods are familiar to all who touch the field of theology. They occur at every stage and phase of the work. The traditional theology,

formulated in the spirit of a static interpretation, protests against change. Her formulations are canonized and sacred. Modern theology says that the very life and efficiency of theology is in adjustment to the changing demands of life and of thought. Traditional theology conceives the Bible as a final message to the world. Modern theology regards the Bible as the faithful record of a growing and endless message. Traditional theology conceives the Bible as "inerrant" or "infallible," and reluctantly admits the function of criticism. Modern theology conceives the Bible as the richest of many sources of practical guidance, and welcomes all the light of research. Traditional theology regards revelation as a constant quantity, an *absolutum*, either coextensive with the Bible or contained therein. The business of exegete and expositor is to discover and construe this absolute content. Modern theology conceives revelation simply as what is actually revealed of God, and testifies to the supreme revealing power of the Biblical record. Again, in the matter of truth or doctrine traditional theology regards the Bible as the "documented revelation of God to man," and the task of theology is "the ascertainment, formulation, and systematization of the truth thus communicated." Modern theology, on the other hand, seeks no such absolute *quantum* which it can formulate and systematize. It gladly finds its material in the whole spiritual realm, so richly illuminated by the Bible, and offers it for religious guidance. And the truths with which it deals—its explanations—must not be identified with fixed doctrines, but must be studied in their roots and in all the stages of their growth. Traditional theology regards Jesus as the oracle whose recorded word is the touchstone of theology. Hence the proof-text method prevails. Modern theology regards Jesus as personality, the spirit of truth, whose spirit—whose outlook on the spiritual—is indeed the test of all theology. But texts must be subordinated to the spirit that speaks through them. Literalism gives place to true spiritualism. In a word, traditional theology moves in a world of absolute conceptions, searching an absolute Bible for an absolute revelation. And its ideal is an absolutely valid and permanent theology. Modern theology conceives its task in utterly different spirit. Theology is an ever-growing science searching

for all records of God's ways with men, all revelations of the Holy Spirit in experience and history. And it seeks so to interpret this revelation for every age and every man that it shall come with the freshness and force of God's word. Christianity, the gospel, Christ, are constant quantities of the traditional theology to be brought as saving facts to that other constant fact, the sinner. Christianity, the gospel, Christ, the sinner, these are all facts for modern theology; but they are facts which grow and expand and vary in endless adjustment to the wondrous growing spirit of men in every age and at every stage of development.

We may further draw out the essential contrast of spirit and method in terms of the following antitheses.

The traditional method starts with a body of truth accepted as absolute, and proceeds deductively. The modern method starts with experience and history, and proceeds inductively. Apriorism is the key to traditionalism. Empiricism is the key to the modern method. According to the traditional method the Bible, or some revelation contained in the Bible, constitutes an unchanging standard of theological truth. For the modern method the Bible, and its teaching so far as we can apprehend it, are not finalities, but registers of human experience and conviction. For traditional theology, revelation has to do with statements. For modern theology, revelation has to do with insight, meanings. Traditional method assumes the possibility of eternal patterns for conduct,—moral finalities, ever valid. Modern method affirms eternal principles and ideals of conduct which yield guidance through interpretation rather than by mechanical application. The modern method regards traditional theology as "standpatism" in religion. The latter regards modern method as "insurgency." The traditional method calls the moderns lawless, and disloyal to the true standards, while the latter profess to be moved by a great moral awakening. For they scornfully decline to take advantage of "half-fare permits to the clergy" in theological thinking. The scientific spirit has pointed out the essential dishonesty of claiming rational exemptions or privileges for theologians. No marvel or miracle must be made to do service for integrity in thinking. The scientific conception

of inviolable law has tended to moralize and tone up modern theological method.

Traditional theology has held aloof from the other sciences and has grudgingly conceded their advance, feeling that many scientific discoveries were inimical to religion. Consistent with its presupposition of a unique, absolute standard of truth, traditional theology has felt obliged to defend her dogmas, and has only reluctantly yielded at certain points where scientific criticism has compelled it. Volumes upon volumes are written whose burden is this: "Even though we have been routed from our ancient stronghold, scientific method cannot reach this new citadel of faith. Here is a reserved district where criticism cannot enter!" Thus miracles are a strong bulwark of traditional theology, for the reason that they are inexplicable. Modern method, on the other hand, has joined hands with every scientific spirit and has been eager for light from every quarter. For the modern method has essayed to put theology upon a common basis with every other true science, in that it shall be empirical, inductive, and fearlessly face the truth. It says that history, experience, and reason will sufficiently sift and protect religious truth. Let us know the facts, and they will be our best revelation of truth! It only asks for a proper limitation of its field, and for tests of truth appropriate to its subject-matter.

Thus, while traditional method is occupied largely with defences and with justifying the old standards, modern method is studying how to make real to men of today the vital message of Christianity. Consistency and system is the central aim of the one; reality and effectiveness is the aim of the other.

To the traditional method, a divine revelation is like Melchizedek, without pedigree or descent: to the modern method, revelation is like a well-born child, rich in ancestry and potential of unborn truth. For the one, discontinuity is the mark of divine revelation: for the other, continuity is a test of truth. It follows that traditional method commonly insists upon the distinction between the natural and the supernatural order,—the secular and the religious. The modern method in theology either obliterates this distinction or gives the terms new significance.

The security and certainty of the traditional method is in the

assumption of a fixed standard to which every teaching is brought to be measured. The security and certainty of the modern method lies in the absence of any such arbitrary standards, since the soul can be trusted to discover and obey the laws of its own being. Even religious truths lie open to our understanding. Freedom of thought is the test of modern orthodoxy. Therefore the method of authority which is the ruling ideal of traditional theology cannot be retained entire or in part by one who frankly concedes the truth of the modern ideal. The incompatibility is complete at this point. It is about the ideal of authority that the traditional movement is rallying its forces, and it is here that the modern movement is leading the fiercest attacks. There is no compromise possible. It is a war to the death.

In a final word, the modern method in theology squarely faces the evolutionary method of regarding life and the world, and thus puts itself squarely on a footing with all other true sciences. In so doing it disregards the old-time demand for absolute standards or absolute proofs. In place of the older, fixed standards it trusts the veracity of the mind's nature in the form of rational principles of insight; and in place of absolute proofs it submits its formulations to the verification of experience. In this spirit it essays to minister to the human heart in the whole range of its need in terms of the law of its life and its growth.

And now when the issue is squarely seen and felt between the modern method and the traditional, together with its epochal significance for theology, many a thoughtful and reverent student gasps out this inquiry: "But if there are no absolute standards of truth, no absolute proofs,—no infallibles or *absoluta* in our approach to the Bible and Christianity,—how can we be absolutely certain of the line between the true and the false in religious explanation?" The question wrings the soul of the teacher who knows sympathetically the mind of his pupil. It is sufficient here to say that the inquiry really begs the question. The "absolute certainty," in the sense meant, has disappeared, with the other absolutes of the older method. With all other true sciences we fall back upon the tests of intelligence and the verification of experience. Independent "proofs" we have none. Are we "absolutely certain" of our conclusions in chemistry or in ethics? The

question is academic. Practically, we can affirm no such infallible standard. But the seeking heart finds its confident way to God, and the seeking understanding finds its confident way to truth, without this external compulsion. "For certainty in concrete things is a matter of life rather than of speculation."[8]

In view of the instinctive protest that arises here from those who feel that this is dismissing the whole matter of truth with an airy wave of the hand, or at least making it a purely subjective and relative matter, we would earnestly point out that this apprehension arises from false inference as to the consequences of method. The earth is as real and solid since we have discovered that it whirls in space and is among the smallest of an infinite universe of worlds, as it was when people regarded it as "fixed" and flat and lonely. Neither does the atomic theory, nor the theory of electrons, undermine our confidence in the stability of things. Movement does not affect the essential stability of things, —but only interprets that stability. So in religious explanation, we need only to note the actual stability of the realities involved and adjust our preconceived conceptions to the newer insight.

Those who feel that subjectivity and uncertainty await those who apply the evolutionary insight to religious problems suffer needless alarm. This is to misunderstand the place and method of application of the modern principle of relativity. There are not only abiding historical facts but there are abiding ideals and principles of intelligence which constitute the fixities of our human knowing. Jesus Christ abides forever, the same in his character and spirit and outlook on the spiritual. Religious experience and rational principles of truth,—these are inalienable possessions, even though we face the self-evident fact that both religion and rationality are growing quantities. We manage our religious problems in terms of these abiding meanings. Christ, experience, the moral reason, are precious possessions by which we can always determine our religious latitude and longitude, and direct our thinking toward the right goal.

Moreover, the tacit assumption of the protest that we must

[8] Borden P. Bowne, Essence of Religion, p. 65. This was always a fundamental principle with this master thinker; and it is, indeed, an illuminating insight of much modern philosophy.

have "external standards" means the demand for some past, fixed standards to which we can look. This means distrust of our actual guiding standards today. What is this but distrust of the guidance of the Holy Spirit today, in our worship of the past? What is it but the denial of the living Christ of present experience, in our worship of the figure of history, nineteen hundred years away? This is the real heresy of religion!

> "Thrice ingrate he whose only look
> Is backward,—focussed on a Book,—
> Neglectful what the Presence saith,
> Though He be near as blood and breath."

There is spiritual rebuke in the insight of the newer method, rich insights into the possibilities of faith, as we cast ourselves on the truth and face the fact that God worketh hitherto, and worketh still, in his own way. The modern preacher who masters the modern meanings of life and the world has his unique and responsible opportunity to bring to men the consciousness of a living God co-working with men today. The preacher's method of interpretation becomes his instrument to save men.

And in any case we cannot restore the Ptolemaic conception of the human world as static. Our world of mind and morals and religion "does move,"—though it is controlled by laws as faithful and abiding as God himself! Our security, like that of all legitimate explanation, rests upon the assumption that this is an "honest world." Theology assumes the veracity of the religious world, though it cannot "prove" its right to its assumption.

III

Turning now from the consideration of this fundamental discord, which we regard as the real crux of the present confusion and ferment, we call attention to some more general issues which involve confusion.

Any really consistent and fruitful thinking is controlled by a view of the world which involves certain presuppositions, a certain large view of the meaning of life, and a corresponding ideal of philosophic method. Thus the great philosophies fall into

distinct types according to these presuppositions of method upon which they rest. For freedom in philosophic thinking can only mean freedom to be absolutely faithful to controlling principles. "Freedom of thought," in the sense of lawless or unprincipled thinking, is unreason. Now it follows that certain types of philosophic method, proceeding from presuppositions which are inimical to religion itself, are valueless or confusing when applied to religious problems. For example, an avowed atheistic philosophy of life could not consistently expound religion based upon theism. There are many present-day currents of thought which are implicitly materialistic, atheistic, or thoroughly agnostic of religious values. When a man controlled by such a philosophy enters the field of theology, whether as exegete, expositor, or systematic formulator of theology, his findings have a qualified value. They must always be estimated upon the background of the theorist's implicit assumptions. Christianity is not consistent with any and all philosophies, and the failure to discern this truth has produced a great number of bizarre and valueless volumes of so-called "scientific" treatment of the Bible and of Christianity. If thinking is to be consequent, it must be consistent; and there is no such thing as a disinterested or colorless attitude in philosophy. The thinker is always committed to something, and his thinking will have this element of relativity. Even philosophy must give an account of itself, for if it is not watched, it will make the worse appear the better reason. So in the matter of theological method in general, we earnestly insist that the work of exegetes and theologians shall be examined in their fundamental, controlling principles and not in their surface-utterances. Some very keen and able men are disqualified for the work under consideration. To see this clearly will be to eliminate some of the confusion from theology.

We can do no more here than point out some of the currents of thought which neutralize the value of religious explanation when they are in control, for the reason that they carry assumptions which undermine the values to which religion is committed.

1. First of all there is a false naturalism that sometimes busies itself with religious problems. Naturalism is the type of philosophy, based upon the analogy of the method of natural science,

which explains all things in terms of genesis and process. It "functions" so easily with the social consciousness of today that it is capable of easy perversion. It might be characterized as the anatomical study of personal and social phenomena. This naturalistic study of phenomena in terms of beginnings and processes does bring us a great insight. But the danger is in a false naturalism which says, in effect, that explanation in terms of process is the full account of things. Anatomy is the last word. This attitude is familiar to students in the field of religion, but it is a barren attitude, for it stops short of those meanings and values of religion which give it worth and warmth and power. The anatomy of religion it is useful to know; but it is the flesh and blood and spirit of living religion which ultimately commend it to men. Theorists of this sort are writing books upon religion today which are hailed as "scientific"; and they are indeed scientific in the sense that they are modelled after the methods of natural science. They are unscientific in the sense that they have not correlated their method to their task, nor adopted tests of truth that bring them into first-hand contact with their data. They always deal with a corpse, and their keen dissection never discovers the actual life that commands religion. Naturalism describes the body of religion, but overlooks its living soul.[9]

2. Then there is a current form of abstract idealism in philosophy which perpetuates the myopic vision of the old rationalism and treats all problems in a transcendental spirit. Many of the religious fads of our day are examples of this type of treatment. Caring more for the articulations of abstract speculation than for the articulations of life, explanations of this type often deal in airy but pretentious styles of philosophic architecture which appeal to the pride of the half-educated. The weakness of this type of philosophy is that the demands of life and experience are overlooked in the abstract and vague effort to reach some supposed logical demand. Moral distinctions are levelled, and the moral reason is stultified. The thread of reality is snapped when religion commits itself to these abstractions; and the

[9] The fault to be criticised in this type of thinking is not that it is not true, but that it does not exhaust the meanings and function of explanation, nor even touch our fundamental religious questionings.

earnestness and concrete devotion to actual life which characterize religion at its best are thus lost. Explanations offered in this spirit are likely to be insensible to the values of human life, and thus of life's supreme distinction,—religion!

3. There is a curious blending of the method of naturalism and the method of abstract idealism in a popular exegetical or historical movement widely current today. It is a method often rather unjustly identified with the Ritschlian method in theology. This is the attempt to "explain" a doctrine or a man or a movement by a process of analysis which ultimately brings the object sought to the vanishing point. Under the guise of pursuing an "historical method" it makes abstract idealism its directive principle, and by a process of refinement, of casting out everything that can be "accounted for" by the laws of development, it essays to reach a sediment, an "irreducible minimum" of truth with which it can operate. We are familiar with the attempt to find in this way the "real Christ" and the "essence of Christianity." The result is likely to be a vacuous or vaporous thing without form, comeliness, or function. Explainers of this type offer us as the ghostly residuum of their reduction an "essential Christ" or an "essential Gospel," which neither informs nor inspires. In the task of discriminating essentials from non-essentials, theological analysis must understand the limitations of method as instrumental and not as tyrannical.

4. Again, there is a movement of thought that expresses an overdone principle of empiricism. Pragmatism expresses the psychological emphasis of the age. But an excessive pragmatism, which renounces all ideal values and makes the test of truth to be merely the demands of the hour, is likely to overlook all the forces that stand above actual life and command it. Thought itself becomes an invertebrate, molluscous thing when it thus repeats the old positivism[10] and makes the actual order the measure of truth. The old rationalistic trust in the logical reason was excessive; but the excessive pragmatic reaction ignores a great guiding principle of the mind's nature, namely, its active power to control life from the point of view of its own

[10] This seems to be the pervasive weakness of Professor Gerald Birney Smith's otherwise admirable discussion in the Symposium cited above (note 3).

ideal; its power to look ahead and forecast the truth in terms of principles that abide through changing doctrines. Mind is dynamic and creative; not merely a passive reflection of logical relations. An excessive empiricism is supine before the problem of life. It does not adequately function with the fact that religion is a conquering power to overcome the world. A true pragmatism must and does adjust itself to this prime fact of religious life.

Thus we might attempt to pick out the philosophic currents and cross-currents which go to make up the mental world of a given age, and we might profitably attempt to distinguish currents from the tidal movements in which all men seem to think together. We make here this partial analysis not in the interest of a thorough-going criticism or condemnation; we only point out that *a philosophic method which is sceptical or agnostic at its roots, or in its fundamental principles, must inevitably repeat its scepticisms in its formulated account of life and religion.* So far to transcend differences of method as justly to estimate them all in their limitations as well as in their fruitfulness, is the real goal of philosophic insight. Only as a theologian measurably attains to this power of rowing against currents can he be other than the helpless victim of a prevailing current or "Zeitgeist." It becomes profitable unto all things rational for a theological student thus to understand the rationale of the movements of thought that control him, and thus to be able discriminatingly to assess the value of his own logic and his own conclusions. Only thus can he transcend the confusion, the scepticism, the helpless uncertainty of the theological atmosphere of his age, by understanding these things in their causes.

IV

A brief sketch of some of the more important positive constructive principles must complete our essay toward theological method.

First,—theology and religion must not be treated as identical terms. Religion is the great human fact that expresses the

soul's life illuminated and controlled by the vision of the divine. Theology is the mind's interpretation of this prime fact of life. Theology thus becomes instrumental and secondary to religion.

Secondly,—as a human fact, religion is not a constant quantity in any save a conceptual sense. It is a growing fact, responsive to the whole complex, growing life of a man. Theology, the intellectual interpretation of religion, must not only take account of this incessant movement of the human spirit in its response to its vision of God, but itself, as our thought about religion, is subject to the laws of thought. This inevitably means that there will be change, growth, development, in our interpretation of religion. Theology cannot be a constant quantity to be handed out to succeeding generations of thinkers; but in a living race or a living man it outgrows all arbitrary standards.

Thirdly,—the historical study of doctrine thus becomes a first principle of theological method. Every Christian doctrine must be interpreted in the light of its history. The real meaning of the doctrine must have regard not only for its origin but for its development and goal. Jesus exemplified this principle in his demand for "fulfilment" of inherited truths.

We must recognize that the ruling conceptions of any age—its science, its philosophy, and its whole outlook upon life—are inevitably reflected in its thinking and shape its doctrinal interpretations. As these conceptions grow or change from age to age with the growth of society, we must learn to discriminate between the abiding truth of a doctrine and its form in any age. Thus the great creeds and symbols of the church become landmarks, monuments, rich revelations of truth to guide us. But a creed or a doctrinal statement cannot permanently become a fixed standard. It is a witness to a spiritual reality; not the living reality itself.

On the other hand, this principle of relativity has some vital consequences for the shaping of an authoritative theology for today. Our accepted conceptions of the world must find sympathetic understanding in the terms of our theological thought. For our own "ruling conceptions" must be the vehicles of the spiritual message to us. Anachronisms may not be untrue,

but they are inadequate to produce conviction. Thus such conceptions as law, development, immanence, socialism, and the like must be the Spirit's instruments to us. Hence the theologian must know the "social consciousness" of his own times as well as of past ages.

Fourthly,—this principle of growth and development must be applied to the Biblical record precisely as to any other record of human experience. The scholar has the same rights of investigation and criticism in the Biblical record as in any other. We may not canonize any standard as an *absolutum* of truth. Thus considered, the Bible, with its precious record of God's life manifested in the experiences of men and nations and its record of God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, becomes our richest source of knowledge of the Christian religion, and our most fruitful source of directive principles for the guidance of life and thought. Considered thus, the Bible is not less essential to the work of a theologian, though it serves a somewhat different function. It becomes not so much an object of study as a means of study. For each Biblical writer is no longer a lonely oracle of revelation, but a fellow-student of the divine revelation. Nowhere are the respective angles of approach of the traditional and the modern student more radically contrasted than here. The inspiration of this latter view of the Bible, once apprehended, will be an immense incentive to vital thinking and vital religion.

Fifthly,—the contention for an "infallible rule of faith" which characterized the traditional demand for a directive standard in theology we must metamorphose into the forms of verification or tests of truth recognized by modern thinking. The synthesis of experience, history, and reason forms the tribunal where our certainties are tested. Thus theology takes its place among the sciences. It is no truer than they; but it is as true, and the theologian's passion for truth is met and satisfied in the same way. Truth lies in the maintaining of balance in the application of our tests of truth. An over-emphasis upon experience results in mysticism; an over-emphasis upon history results in a false naturalism; an over-emphasis upon reason results in rationalism. Each expresses an excess.

If an age of overgrown rationalism neglected to supplement the guidance of reason by an appeal to experience, it would seem that the excessive empiricism of our day needs to see the abiding truth of rationalism. History and experience must not be studied as merely inarticulate, successive phases of the flow of life. Reason expresses the fact that intelligence brings its own nature to the problem, and that nature is constructive and normative in its knowledge rather than passively reflective. The principle of continuity is rational as well as temporal; logical as well as successive. Thus the phases of history and experience are to be studied in their relation to the logical as well as the practical demands of life. Theology is controlled by rational necessities as well as empirical. Theology must be understood in its rational unfolding as well as in its historical. There is a true apriorism that must guide all wholesome empiricism. A theology which commands assent in any age must "function" with the logical reason as well as with practical needs.

Sixthly,—one consequence of a better analysis of religion is the disentanglement of essentials from non-essentials. This brings the clearer insight that the august fact of religion moves in the realm of moral relations. On the one hand, this insight is reflected in a modern effort to eliminate metaphysical considerations from theology. On the other hand, it is manifest in a wholesome discrimination against formalism, legalism, and traditional superstitions. The essential quality of religion is always moral. The secret of the Lord is ever with the righteous.

This becomes a controlling principle of modern theology, so that we may justly speak of the moralizing of theology as the supreme task of the reconstruction. Religion is pre-eminently a matter of ethics and not of etiquette. Theological construction must be controlled by moral earnestness and moral insight. The characteristic emphasis of modern theology is the application of the moral test to all doctrinal formulations. Spiritual authority involves moral consistency.

Seventhly,—Christian theology interprets the type of spiritual life and experience which Jesus Christ created and of which he is the supreme revelation and standard. Christian theology, therefore, is the type of religious interpretation which always

comes back to the spirit of Jesus Christ for its final test.[11] It stands or falls with the test of the spiritual ideal which he incarnated in his character and conduct. And we must come back again and again to the concrete historical Jesus and his gospel to measure and test the spirit of the living Christ whose guidance within us is our supreme wisdom.

Eighthly,—to summarize our point of view, the task of Christian theology is to learn the Christian gospel of the spiritual life in the fullest and clearest way in which it has been revealed—in Jesus Christ, and in all experience and history as the context of Jesus and his gospel—and then to find the vehicle for the expression of thought which shall commend that message to living men today.

This involves the sympathetic study of the consciousness of our own time. For a vital and true theology must so translate the Christian truth into the living thought of today that it will grip men's convictions, persuade their reason, and compel their affections. The best theology is that which, while conveying the spiritual message of Jesus Christ, sympathetically interprets what is true in all great historic forms of doctrine, and translates this truth into a language that shall command the moral reason of the men who live today and judge them and win them. For the practical aim of Christian theology is to bring to living men Jesus' sense of a living message from the Living God.

[11] This language will seem too indefinite to some readers. We desire here only to make Jesus Christ the supreme test and principle of Christian theology, without entering the field of christological theory. The acceptance of this canon of criticism is consistent with a great variety of conceptions of Jesus and his work.

CONCERNING NATURAL RELIGION[1]

W. W. FENN

In present theological conditions, one who is called upon to discourse concerning "natural religion as it is commonly called and understood by divines and learned men" finds himself embarrassed at the outset by the difficulty of defining his subject in accordance with the requirement, since the term is variously understood by "divines and learned men." In a recent issue of the *Harvard Theological Review* Professor Knight of Tufts College described three specific uses of the correlative terms "nature" and "supernatural," each of which, moreover, comprises many subordinate varieties. The late Dr. C. C. Everett, to whom, by the way, Professor Knight does not refer, defined the natural as "the universe considered as a composite whole," the world of cause and effect, one might say, in which the laws of Haeckel's "Substance" prevail, or the *natura naturata* of Spinoza, and the supernatural as the non-composite unity, Spinoza's *natura naturans*, which manifests itself in and through the natural. If this use be accepted, and with it Dr. Everett's definition of religion corresponding to the stage in the development of the discussion where the terms first appear, namely, as "feeling towards the supernatural," it is difficult to find any meaning for the term natural religion save as it may denote religion awakened by contemplation of nature. Otherwise, it becomes a contradiction in terms, the adjective cancelling the noun or vice versa. In substantial agreement with these definitions is the habit of regarding the supernatural as covering the realm of free personality, both human and divine, while the world of things, in which law uniformly and inexorably rules, is styled nature. Here too, since religion resides in personality and, at least among those who employ this terminology, involves a relation to personality, natural religion becomes meaningless.

[1] The Dudleian Lecture, delivered in Emerson Hall, Harvard University, May 10, 1911.

Again, and perhaps more commonly, natural religion designates a religion in harmony with the nature of man—its doctrines capable of unification with his knowledge, its experiences interpreting and fulfilling all other experiences of his life. Those who accept this terminology usually identify the supernatural with the irrational and the miraculous, and regard any other than natural religion as mere superstition and ignorance which should be hounded off the face of the earth. From this point of view, it is quite immaterial how religious ideas were derived: they may have been imparted by revelation, which in this case is held, as by Toland, to denote merely the way in which the ideas were communicated, or they may have sprung up within man himself. In either case, the point is that they are capable of appropriation into the unity of thought and experience and for this reason belong under the category of natural religion. According to this definition, therefore, all religion worthy of the name is natural, as according to the former it is supernatural.

Without pursuing the analysis farther, let us assume arbitrarily, and for the purposes of the discussion, that natural religion means, what undoubtedly the founder of this lectureship understood it to mean, such knowledge of God, his existence and nature, as may be obtained by man through the exercise of his normal and rational powers directed to the study of the human and the material world. From the middle of the seventeenth to the middle of the nineteenth century, and particularly in the eighteenth, there was quite extraordinary interest in this subject, especially among the English, to whose common sense the facts of organic adaptation made convincing appeal. The literary output was remarkable—we need only mention such outstanding examples as Newton, Ray, Boyle, Derham, Wollaston, Butler, wielding a hiltless sword, Lord Brougham, Hume, Paley, Stewart, and the Bridgewater Treatises, to suggest how voluminous it was. Among divines and learned men of Dudley's time, then, it was commonly believed that the study of nature yielded results which furnished a firm and unassailable basis for revealed religion. Thus the organ of natural religion is reason, while that of revealed religion is faith, by which truths are received which the reason could not of itself have discovered although they may

be capable of appropriation by it. In the words of Culverwell, "As the unity of a Godhead is demonstrable and clear to the eye of reason, so the trinity of persons, that is, three glorious relations in one God, is as certain to an eye of faith. It is as certain to this eye of faith that Christ is truly God as it was visible to an eye both of sense and reason that he is truly man. Faith spies out the resurrection of the body as reason sees the immortality of the soul." With this understanding of the term, therefore, we have to inquire how it stands today with natural religion. Is it possible for us, using its historical materials and methods, to arrive at its conclusions, particularly with respect to the existence of God?

Robert Browning's poem "Caliban on Setebos" has for a subtitle "Natural Theology on the Island," indicating that the author included within the purpose of his poem a criticism of the methods of natural theologians by showing their fallacy when employed by so brutal a creature as Caliban. It is indeed an effective satire, so effective that we must turn for an answer from Browning to Browning, from the author of Caliban to the author of Saul, where precisely the same method of argument is used but with entire approval. Caliban cruelly and wantonly pinches off the legs of passing crabs, David's heart goes out in love and pity towards the stricken king, and each argues from himself to God. But if the method is valid in the case of David, the fault with Caliban's reasoning was not in its method but in its premises. If a base line is poorly selected, the untrustworthy results which follow do not invalidate the mathematical principles employed.

In further reply to Browning's criticism, it might be fairly urged that he has represented only in part the method he impugns, in that he has considered but one of the two principal lines of argument commonly adopted, each of which supplements the other. If the argument from man would lead to caprice or wilfulness, that from nature proves order and stability. In its more cogent forms, that is, the argument for natural religion reasons from the order and adaptations of nature to ordering intelligence and from the moral attributes of man to the benevolence of God. It is undoubtedly true that at various periods in the

history of the argument one of these methods has been emphasized sometimes to the exclusion of the other, nevertheless the foremost advocates of natural religion have perceived that both are necessary for convincing proof.

It is worth observing, moreover, that in its early years the Christian church came very near surrendering both forms on account of certain tendencies of thought which were happily pronounced heretical. If Marcion, for instance, had determined the course of Christian thinking, the argument from nature would have been put out of commission, since he and his followers distinguished between the God of revelation and the God of creation, deeming the latter, who was identified with the God of the Jews and hence of the Old Testament, an inferior being, a demiurge, very like Setebos, and consequently denied the possibility of inference from the world to the true God. The reason for this view, as for Manicheeism, is all too evident in the character of the world with its mingled weal and woe, sunshine and tempest, smiling fields and destructive torrents, a haunting sense of which, as we shall hereafter see, has always chilled the ardor of advocates of natural religion and must ever weaken the demonstrative force of the argument. But the church was so tenacious of its claim to antiquity through the Old Testament and its prophecies that it refused to renounce the God of the ancient covenant and Marcion was disowned. Thus the world was saved to God, and the argument from nature occurring often in the Old Testament remained intact. "The invisible things of Him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even His everlasting power and divinity." Notwithstanding the evil in the world, the various explanations offered for which cannot here be reviewed, it was stoutly maintained that the world was God's world nevertheless, furnishing in its majesty and beauty ample evidence of a divine creator and sustainer.

Again, the attempts to deny the real humanity of Jesus menaced the second form of the argument because proceeding from a view of man which would have been destructive. This habit of thought was akin to the one just mentioned in that both associated the world and the flesh with the devil. Hence it was supposed that

the celestial Christ could not really have taken to himself sinful flesh, and all flesh was deemed sinful, but must have appeared in its likeness alone. Accordingly, it was not the natural but only the spiritual man in whom the divine image could be discerned and from whom one could argue up to God. But the church was nobly determined to maintain the humanity of Christ no less than his divinity, and in so doing committed itself to a corresponding view of humanity. Undoubtedly the Augustinian theology, deeply influenced by Augustine's earlier Manicheeism, served practically to discredit an argument which, however, still remained theoretically possible. Thus, notwithstanding difficulties, the church held to a position which kept open the way of natural religion.

Plainly, however, such knowledge of God as could be derived from the works of nature had not availed to lead men to acknowledge and serve him, and in consequence the image of God in man had become hopelessly obscured. Accordingly it was held that God had made a special and additional revelation of himself in order to make more sufficient and efficient the general revelation which had proved inadequate. And thus natural religion came to be deemed rudimentary and needless. What need of the candle of the Lord in the reason of man when his sun is shining in full splendor in the sky of faith? Why turn to the beggarly rudiments of the world when in Christ is God's consummate revelation? Thus it happened, naturally enough, that, although natural religion continued to be theoretically possible, it was practically ignored. "When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." When gods arrive the half-gods go. So long as revelation stood secure, scant attention was paid to the dimmer, more uncertain, and less effective revelation in nature and humanity. Thus the matter stood through centuries of Christian teaching until the Renaissance and the Reformation.

The rise of Humanism brought, as has often been remarked, a rediscovery both of nature and of man, and was accompanied by a discrediting of the authority of the church as custodian of revelation. The Protestant Reformation was a direct attack upon the historic church, although the reality of revelation was

stoutly defended, but inevitably the shifting of the seat of authority tended to weaken the sense of authority and Christianity itself fell under suspicion and into uncertainty. Naturally, therefore, there came a return to natural religion, and the two arguments from nature and from man came to the front. Very rapidly we must trace the fortunes of these two arguments, beginning with that from nature.

This argument had been revived earlier by Raymond de Sebonde, a Spanish physician, professor of theology and medicine at Toulouse, who in 1436 published his *Theologia Naturalis*, on account of which he has sometimes been called the father of natural religion. The author's preface is highly significant. It affirms that the treatise relies upon no authority, not even that of the Bible, for its aim is to confirm that which is put forth in the sacred Scriptures and to lay the foundations upon which we may be able to build that which is contained in them. Thus, so far as we are concerned, the teaching precedes both Old Testament and New. God has given us two books, that of the universal order of things and that of the Bible. The former was first given from the beginning of the world, for every creature is but a letter traced by the hand of God, so that of a great multitude of creatures, like a great number of letters, this book is composed, in which man finds himself and is, as it were, the capital and principal letter. The second book of the sacred Scriptures was afterwards given to man and this in the failure of the other, in which (so blind was he!) he saw nothing. Hence the first is known to all the world and not the second, for one must be a clerk to be able to read. Besides, the book of nature cannot be falsified, effaced, or falsely interpreted, neither can heretics pervert it, and in it can be no heresy, quite unlike the book of the Bible. Both have proceeded from the same Master. God has given us the creatures as he has given us the Scriptures. Hence they agree well with one another and do not contradict each other.

This suggests a much more modern treatment than the book really contains, for the author goes on to say that no one is able to read in this great book of nature unless he is first purged of his original sin and illuminated by grace—both of which apparently

depend upon the agency of the church. Nevertheless, here in the first half of the fifteenth century is a truly remarkable utterance concerning natural religion which is a fit introduction to the literature that was to follow.

Starting from the physical world as it is in our knowledge, subsequent arguments for natural religion may be roughly grouped under the categories of Cause and Design—from the world as effect to God as creative cause, and from the order and adaptations of the world to Intelligence as controlling and co-ordinating all. In Hume's *Dialogue concerning Natural Religion*, these arguments are subjected to rigorous examination. The dialogue form which Hume adopted was peculiarly suitable to the circumstances in which he wrote, for it enabled him to state objections without committing himself to them, and so successfully was it employed that there is still uncertainty with which person in the debate he identifies himself—Philo or Cleanthes. For our purposes, however, the question is of no importance, since the arguments stand or fall by their own weight and not by his authority. With reference to the argument from order to Intelligence there is an objection advanced by Hume, more thoroughly developed by Romanes, which is staggering. Within the limits of our experience and observation do order and adaptation invariably prove active intelligence? That can hardly be maintained in face of animal instincts, for the beaver constructs its dam and the bee its comb in a way marvellously adapted to the end sought, but can we say that intelligent recognition of that end and direction of activity towards it have achieved the result? Can intelligence be predicated of the beaver and the bee? It may be pleaded indeed that there is a sort of unconscious intelligence resident within the animal or the insect because of its participation in the universal world-intelligence which works through it, but such an answer presupposes the very thing which is to be proved. If, then, our own experience does not entitle us to affirm that order and adaptation invariably proceed from intelligence, with what plausibility can it be argued that similar facts on the cosmic scale point demonstratively to Intelligence as creative and guiding power? The analogy breaks down and the argument collapses, and this even without reference to the theory of evolution which has affected

disastrously the argument as employed by believers in special creation. In fact, the principal effect of the acceptance of the theory of evolution has been to shift the argument from adaptation to order, and accordingly to find in the imposing system of natural laws, including those of evolution, evidence of determining intelligence—an argument which, notwithstanding the severe criticism to which it has been subjected, still holds the field and is the most persuasive form in which the ancient reasoning from the world to God can now be presented.

With regard to the causal argument it is needless to repeat the familiar criticisms. Even if the causal idea be held valid beyond the realm of experience, it would warrant us in arguing only to a cause sufficient to produce the given effects and not to a cause surpassing them. But remembering Hume's own notion of cause, it is impossible to believe that he intended to have either of his imaginary disputants taken as representative of his own opinions. Much has been made of the point that the causal idea obliges us to choose between an uncaused first cause and an infinite regress, but is not the one alternative as inconceivable as the other? Certainly no argument can be pronounced demonstrative which at its conclusion offers us two alternatives both equally inconceivable.

Finally, there is the objection that neither argument, nor both combined, would justify the attributing of benevolence to the creating and directing cause. The formal conclusion of Hume's argument seems to be that we are warranted in affirming intelligence but not goodness from the facts of the world. This has been the outcome of many another investigation before and since. The facts of evil in the world are too numerous and appalling to be blinked. Nor has the doctrine of evolution done so much to help matters as many seem to suppose. Rather, it has deepened the problem by teaching that suffering is not merely incidental but is, so to speak, inherent within the nature of things and essential to the progress of which so much is magnificently and amusingly said. What if a good end has been attained in man,—still the result is but partial and along a single path; the suffering of animals has not abated since man appeared save as he has grown merciful, and the tender mercies of mankind are

often cruel to the animal world; and, what is more, we are by no means prepared to accept uncritically on behalf of God a plea which we often despise in the case of man, that the end justifies the means. Hence, as many urge, of whom McTaggart may be mentioned as a single representative, in view of the facts of evil God cannot be regarded as omnipotent or even as supremely powerful and also good: if we reason from the facts of the world to a creative intelligence, the same facts constrain us to deny his goodness or his power. In the words of our own honorably remembered Professor Cooke, "I do not believe, however, in any sense that nature proves the goodness of God. . . . So prominent indeed is the evil in nature, and so insidiously and mysteriously does it pervade the whole system, that an argument to prove the malignity of God could be made to appear quite as plausible as the arguments which are frequently urged to prove his pure benevolence." It may be indeed that the presence of evil in the world is not incompatible with goodness, provided goodness can be otherwise established, but if natural religion appeals to the world, to the world it must go and abide by its verdict—Not proven.

But it is frequently pleaded that all this proceeds in forgetfulness of the fact that man also is part of nature and that in his advancing worth appears the end towards which nature has all along been striving. That is to say, many present-day champions of natural religion insist that its line must be drawn to include man as the interpretation of nature. This is indeed true but irrelevant to the present issue, for, let us repeat, the development has not been along a single line or even along many lines converging in man. And it is absurd to argue that the goodness in man justifies the evil in the world.

This particular use, however, of the theoretical incorporation of man into nature in an effort to make good the defects of an argument from the purely physical world is comparatively recent, and a word must be said about a much earlier form taken by the second of the principal lines of argument for natural religion—that from the nature of man to God. It is a form which flourished in the period of the Deists in England. The great conflict between Protestantism and Romanism, a conflict waged not in

the world of ideas alone but unhappily also on the battlefields of earth, with men and not ideas alone as combatants bent on one another's destruction, was still fresh in memory, and the wrangling sects of Protestantism were perpetuating the strife. Naturally there was great longing for peace, and how could it be attained better than by emphasizing the points of agreement among warring parties, which indeed were far more numerous and significant than those on which they differed, and if these agreements could be established upon some other authority than that of the Bible, with its almost limitless possibilities of interpretation and misinterpretation, so much the better. Hence we find Lord Herbert of Cherbury announcing five truths of natural religion which, as he believed, were innate in man and consequently were in need of no external support. The five points were: there is one highest divine being; this being is to be worshipped; the most important part of his worship consists in virtue and piety; blasphemy and crime must be atoned for by repentance; punishment and reward follow after this life. These ideas Herbert believed to be implicit in the nature of man in such a way that, whenever an appropriate occasion arose, they mounted into his consciousness with unimpeachable authority. But were not these the essentials of religion upon which not only all Christians but also all men, just because they were men, were agreed, and did they not offer a certain and sufficient basis of unity and ground of peace? The attempt was at least stimulating, and attention was directed to the mind of man in the hope of discovering there as a universal possession, if not these particular points of Lord Herbert, at any rate certain *notitiae communes* constituting natural religion. Into the history of these various attempts we cannot go. They were made both by those who accepted and by those who denied revelation. Mention must be made, however, of a form of the undertaking which is of especial interest to us gathered here to-night in Emerson Hall. The argument seemed to have received its quietus when Locke denied innate ideas, although Lord Herbert himself seems to have put it in a form which would have permitted his followers to reply that they meant not exactly ideas but rather tendencies to action of such a sort that these ideas were their legitimate and

necessary intellectual formulations. But this form also was threatened when Kant affirmed the reality of these tendencies as mental forms but denied them validity outside the world of experience. Yet it was soon asked, Why this denial which virtually throws us into scepticism? If the integration of man with nature be acknowledged, shall we not find the unity of both in one all-embracing life of God whereof each is manifestation? If this be so, then man and nature are of one tissue and structure and the forms of human thinking are also the forms of nature's activity. Then man is the clearer revelation of that which, or of Him who, is the very inmost being of man and nature both. What is latent in nature is patent in man. This was the creative idea of Emerson and of the New England Transcendentalists. Accordingly, by them, the basis of religion was found in the human soul as bearer of God himself within which were found certain intuitions—the idea of God, the sentiment of duty, the assurance of immortality—which as inalienable possessions of humanity were therefore unquestionable disclosures of God. How illogical and silly to seek a revelation from without, while God was thus perpetually and universally revealing himself within! Here was natural religion; and what more was needed, if indeed more had been given?

But intuitions are dubious things, and knowledge of earlier races and of contemporary peoples in early stages of development by no means serves to confirm the optimistic confidence of Parker, for example, that the farther back one goes the clearer and purer become these intuitions. In fact, is it not more likely that these supposed intuitions are actual inculcations for which centuries of Christian thinking and training are responsible? The argument which once seemed irrefragable soon lost cogency.

Meanwhile, however, there had developed a metaphysical form of the argument much more profound and promising. The question was not so much whether our detailed knowledge of the world or of man indicates God as whether our knowledge as such, in form, that is, rather than content, does not necessarily imply God. The world of sense is discontinuous, that of our knowledge is unified: does reality correspond to sense or to

knowledge? If to the latter, then it also is unified and structural, and consciousness furnishes the only form we know for the organization of reality into unity. Is not God, therefore, necessarily implied in our knowledge? The inquiry involved one of the paradoxes which rejoice a metaphysical mind. The content of our knowledge may lead us to doubt or even deny the existence of God but the structure of the denial involves the affirmation of that which is denied. We cannot guarantee the value of our denial save by a tacit affirmation of that which is openly denied. Into this form of the argument it would be superfluous to enter further, for here at Harvard all its phases are perfectly familiar, as well as all the criticisms of it. Suffice it to say that thus theism becomes part of the general epistemological problem. To accept the validity of knowledge in its detailed contents and deny the structure of our knowledge would seem absurd. And if, acknowledging that the trustworthiness of knowledge in concrete detail is not susceptible of logical demonstration, we nevertheless accept it by a sort of ontological good faith, it is hard to see why a similar procedure is not equally warranted with reference to the structural implications of knowledge.

It is remarkable, however, that the course of natural religion, which started among the common ways of men with a simplicity which promised universal comprehension and acceptance, should have led us to these heights of speculation whither only the more reflective philosophers dare climb and in whose rarefied atmosphere only the stout-hearted can dwell. It seems to have fetched a wide compass around to that earlier view of Varro as represented by Augustine which appears to have identified natural religion with an esoteric cult of the philosophers. Surely this is not the sort of natural religion contemplated by the founder of this lectureship, which was to serve as the solid foundation upon which in the succeeding years of a student's life was to be raised the imposing structure of good old-fashioned New England Congregationalism. Can such a natural religion as this ever become universal?

Here, then, it becomes necessary to draw the distinction between theology and religion, and to confess that so far we have been speaking of natural theology and not of natural religion. That

the two ideas have been confused throughout the process we have been hastily sketching is the only excuse for not making the differentiation earlier. But in a book written a generation ago by J. R. Seeley, and properly entitled *Natural Religion*, the distinction was made, and it was shown with almost prophetic insight and power that there already existed a natural religion of a kind hitherto unrecognized which was destined to increase in depth and richness. In truth, Seeley's book, now almost forgotten, seems to me one of the most significant contributions ever made to the literature of the subject, which should have marked a turning-point in thought concerning natural religion quite as noteworthy as that which his *Ecce Homo* made in the popular appreciation of Jesus. For the tendency which he was keen enough to detect has gone on apace, until it has become the most important factor in the religious world of today. The Christian church bewails its diminishing influence, which indeed is a palpable fact, but it has been slow to recognize that outside its borders there has been growing a religious life which it has inspired only indirectly, if at all, and which it by no means nourishes or directs. This extra-confessional and extra-ecclesiastical religious life seeks no alliance with any church, nor would it find itself at home there, but it cherishes a love of truth so pure and ardent that even the most precious traditional beliefs are willingly relinquished in obedience to its august demands, a devotion to goodness which stops at no expenditure of time or treasure or effort that it may give greater happiness and worth to other lives, a love of beauty which demands a city and a country beautiful, and is resolved that even the humblest shall be surrounded by the ennobling influences of art and music and educated into aesthetic appreciation. The point to be insisted upon, then, is the actual presence in the world today of a genuine, although unconventional, religious life wholly independent of ancient forms however tender and sacred as well as of historic tradition however uplifting. It concerns itself not a whit with the arguments we have been rehearsing, finding indeed ominous intimations in the word, as if we had been rehearsing arguments long since dead and buried. It knows not the language of Canaan or even of Jerusalem, still less of Nicaea and Geneva, for its speech smacks

wholesomely of the soil and the twentieth century, nor has it the faintest interest in the endeavor to translate its utterances into the hieratic dialect of formal religion. Yet as the modern man confronts the world of nature and of man, he makes direct and immediate response in natural religion. No worshipper ever felt more deeply the majesty and wonder of his God than the student of science feels, in reasonable awe, the sublime order of the universe. Those who only accept at second hand the conclusions of scientific scholars seldom know in their own experience the sobering and fructifying sense of mystery which often descends upon a reflecting master in the realms of science. He knows full well that the mystery of the world has not been dispelled, rather has it been deepened by enlarging knowledge. True, a man of science may refuse to allow himself to dwell upon the mystery he can but feel, lest it should seduce him from his appointed task, but the mystery is there, he feels it, and sometimes the analytic mind of the scholar yields to the appreciative mind of the man—more often, I fancy, than is generally supposed. The sense of mystery always has accompanied religion, and whoever faces today the world of nature thoughtfully is filled with awe. In addition, religion has inspired a feeling of confidence because of assurance that God was on the side of his worshipper, yet no devotee ever offered his prayer with half the confidence that a modern engineer constructs a bridge. This ordered world can be trusted not to deny itself or betray one who puts intelligent confidence in it. Schleiermacher and Calvin, each in his own way, emphasized the feeling of dependence as essential to religion until there was need to bring to the front again the dignity and worth of the individual man, but neither Calvin nor Schleiermacher nor any of their followers in piety ever felt more strongly the sense of dependence than does the man who today acknowledges the absolute sovereignty of natural laws, and Channing never taught more convincingly the worth of man than does he who, recognizing his dependence, is assured, nevertheless, that to him is given through knowledge of laws ability to control the forces of nature to serve his purposes. Whether or no the universe is animated by a purpose which directs its course towards the highest ends, it is at least amenable

to the ideals of man and may be guided by him towards their realization. No investigator has the least fear that his researches will unlock a force fatal to the highest life of man. On the contrary, he is confident that the unmeasured resources of the universe may all be utilized for human well-being. In this perfect trust and confidence is there not something corresponding to the trust which the old-time worshipper reposed in his God? The order of the universe may not lend itself as of old to the argument of natural theology, but it does far more, it inspires natural religion in the breast of man. Furthermore, the remarkable fact is that the evil of the world, which as we have seen always menaced natural theology, does not seem to impair this natural religion. One who knows nature at first hand is fully and keenly aware of her awful tragedies, nevertheless it is precisely he who often finds in nature a pure delight, rising at times to a sense of companionship which is the very acme of spiritual joy. Natural religion, then, solves in experience the problem which natural theology has so far failed to solve in thought. Thus increasing knowledge of nature has given to the modern man the religious feelings towards nature which the worshipper has cherished towards his God. There are the same feelings of awe, trust, spiritual companionship, only they seem not to be directed towards the same object.

The same fact appears even more markedly in the world of man whence natural theology sought to draw its second great argument. If love of man is of the essence of religion, it surely is not lacking nowadays among those who would not call themselves religious, and who certainly are not religious if judged by conventional ecclesiastical standards. The church honors men like St. Francis of Assisi and the holy martyrs who surrendered all their goods and even life itself in obedience to the command of Christ, but in our own time not once nor twice have we seen young men, and old men too for that matter, turning their backs upon comfort and ease and devoting time, energy, and life to the welfare of their fellows, not in obedience to Christ, but at the bidding of their own sympathetic friendliness. The world may pronounce such men fanatics, fools, and crack-brained enthusiasts, yet in their "fanaticism" is exhibited a spirit which now is

stirring mightily in the souls of men and which is thoroughly religious in character. All about us, thronging the ways of men, are those who never talk about loving their fellows, who in fact would shrink from the pompous phrase, but whose hearts abound in friendliness and good will. They are not blind to the wickedness of men but find in it their supreme incentive to self-sacrificing service. They do not call themselves religious, and if religion is indicated by church attendance and by formal profession, they are not religious, but in reality they are men of natural religion.

Natural Theology has heretofore busied itself chiefly with the world of nature and of man, seeking thence to derive arguments for the existence of God. With the possible exception of the argument based on the general system of laws which interprets the prevailing order of things and the metaphysical argument which endeavors to unfold the implications of knowledge, these attempts must be pronounced logically unsuccessful as they have proved practically insufficient. Meanwhile, however, there has sprung up a natural religion, nourished in good part by the very influences which have been subverting the old-time natural theology, which is genuinely religious in feeling and will-attitude. Not that there may not be higher and purer forms of religion than this which has been described, for there may be deeper appreciation of the object by which these religious feelings are awakened and to which they are responsive. Thus is revealed the function of natural theology, which is so to interpret and correlate this natural religion as to carry it over into the world of thought. Such questions as the following, then, will be raised by natural theology. What must be the real nature of a world towards which, notwithstanding its abundant appearances of irrationality and inhumanity, those who know it most thoroughly have grown to entertain such sentiments of awe approaching reverence, of trustful confidence, and even of sympathetic comradeship, sentiments which have deepened instead of diminishing with more intimate knowledge? What is the meaning of the feeling with which man, as part of this mysterious universe, regards himself and his fellows, of his ideals which far outrun his actual, and his hopes which promise indefinitely more than eye hath seen or ear

heard for the ever-greatening future of humanity? The answer to such inquiries rests with natural theology, an answer for which the metaphysical investigation into the implications of knowledge furnishes precedent and method and indeed offers the most satisfactory suggestion. Let it be added also that Christianity, which has been changing in recent years with almost incredible rapidity, has so far universalized its distinctive concepts that it is in a fair way to become in its new form at once an interpretation and a fulfilment of this natural religion.

THE IDEA OF A MODERN ORTHODOXY

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Systematic theology is, and of right ought to be, primarily practical. In the first place, true religion is both one of the ends of an ideal human life and, in the long run, an indispensable means to the morality which is most essential to human welfare, inner and outer. In the second place, theology is necessary as an instrument for the proper control of the development and expression of religion—a special case of the function of ideas in the control of life. It follows, therefore, that a sound theology is a human necessity. The purpose of the theologian, whatever else it may or must include, must be to find those religious truths which are essential to the vitality and efficiency of the best type of human religion.

That this has really been the aim of theologians in the great formative periods of the history of Christian doctrine may readily be shown. The prevailing impression with regard to orthodoxy and excluded heresies is that the distinction between them is arbitrary and external. This is indeed to the modern mind true in large measure of the distinction between the old orthodoxy and heresy; but in their own day this distinction was neither arbitrary nor external. Then it was organically related to the most pressing of problems; it was supremely vital, for the issues involved were nothing short of spiritual life and death.

Examine, for instance, the theology of that pillar of Greek Christian orthodoxy, Athanasius. The religious interest of the day centred in the question of immortality. Athanasius, as the spokesman of orthodoxy, was supremely concerned to conserve the assurance of a blessed immortality. Man, as such, according to the presuppositions of the Greek mind, was essentially corruptible and mortal. Only the divine was incorruptible, immortal. For corruptible, mortal human nature to put on incorruption and

immortality, it must become partaker of the divine nature throughout; it must participate in the very substance of the eternally perfect God himself. If, then, Christianity was to be a veritable gospel to the Greek mind, it was essential to maintain that in Christ humanity was permeated through and through with the very being and essence of God. This is the key to the Nicene formulation, with its insistent repetition, "the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten not made, consubstantial with the Father." As Athanasius explains, "Mankind is perfected in Him and restored, as it was made at the beginning, nay, with greater grace. For, on rising from the dead, we shall no longer fear death, but shall ever reign in Christ in the heavens. And this has been done, since the own Word of God Himself, who is from the Father, has put on the flesh and become man. For if, being a creature, he had become man, man had remained just what he was, not joined to God. . . . For man had not been deified if joined to a creature, or unless the Son were very God; nor had man been brought into the Father's presence, unless he had been His natural and true Word who had put on the body. . . . Therefore the union was of this kind, that He might unite what is in man by nature to him who is in the nature of the Godhead, and his salvation and deification might be sure." (*Orationes contra Arianos*, ii, 67, 70.) The one fatal defect of practically all the heresies rejected by the orthodox Greek Christians was their failure to conserve in thought the one supremely important religious value—the gospel of eternal life.

It was not otherwise with the theological thought of Western Christendom in its earlier formative period. Here the *Cur Deus Homo* is perhaps our most striking example. Anselm's object in this epoch-making treatise was to show, not by means of the substance-philosophy of the Greeks, but by means of those juridical ideas which were vital in the experience of his contemporaries, that it was impossible for man "to enjoy a happy immortality . . . unless God became man, and unless all things were to take place which we hold with regard to Christ." From the point of view of the Western mediaeval mind with its Romanized conceptions, it was indispensable for the complete satisfaction of

God's honor in view of man's infinite sin, that there be either the suffering of finite man for an infinitely long period or the suffering of an infinite being, God as well as man, for a finite period. Thus the only alternative to everlasting damnation for every sinner was to be found in the reality of the vicarious, penal suffering of him who was God and man in one person. Here again the decisive consideration leading to the selection of the belief in "God in Christ" as orthodox, in opposition to all deviating positions as heretical, was the interest in the conservation of indispensable religious values. If there was to be blessedness, eternal life, for man, the substitutionary punishment of the God-man seemed indispensable; and so long as the older presuppositions existed, all deviations from this position were inevitably dreaded by Protestant and Catholic alike as damnable heresies.

But this suggests a special reason why theological construction is important in the present situation. The old orthodoxies were true hypothetically. That is, if salvation, blessedness, eternal life, is possible only on the conditions presupposed by ancient or mediaeval thought, then the central elements of those orthodoxies must be maintained, for Christian faith must hold that salvation is possible. But the fact is that the older presuppositions are not those of the modern mind. We no longer adhere to the metaphysical presuppositions of the ancient Greek church, nor to the external legalism of the mediaeval churches, Roman and Protestant. Advances in scientific knowledge have caused changes in the views, not simply of the technical philosopher, but of the average man of today. Changes in human interests and activities also, partly caused by new knowledge, partly otherwise, have produced their characteristic changes in thought, so that religion is in a radically altered situation in the modern world. It is no longer necessary for us to believe the old orthodoxies upon the old grounds; and so the question arises, Is it necessary to believe them at all, and if so, why? The former orthodoxies were good, but they seem to have grown stale. They successfully met situations which no longer exist.

What is obviously suggested by these facts is the idea of a modern orthodoxy, a formulation of the doctrines necessary and effective for the conservation of the faith which will meet the

vital religious needs of the modern man.[1] This does not mean a return to traditionalism and the appeal to an external authority. That is no longer possible for the emancipated intellect. If we accept Professor William Adams Brown's recent definition of the new theology, in his article entitled "The Old Theology and the New,"[2] as "the theology whose method is determined by the results of modern scientific movement, both on the objective side in the acceptance of development as the law of the physical universe, and on the subjective side by the recognition of the contribution which the mind itself makes to the content of its own knowledge," we are fast approaching a state of affairs where all must be new theologians. The autonomy of the thinking subject must be as fully respected in theology as in mathematics and physics.

But neither does the idea of a modern orthodoxy imply the setting up of a new traditionalism which shall bind the minds and consciences of future Christians to those formulations which express our independent convictions. Never again must there be placed about the neck of religion the millstone of dogmas enforced by external authority. Although there is still need of a greater confidence in the dependableness of the spirit of man at its best, freedom in religion is being rapidly realized, and will undoubtedly be a permanent achievement of humanity. Henceforth the great religious problem is not freedom but truth.

Not a reversion, then, to traditionalism and the orthodoxy of the past, just because it was the orthodoxy of that day, nor yet the establishing of a new traditionalism for the future, is what is meant by a modern orthodoxy, but, with frank acceptance of the modern situation and the liberal concession to others of the freedom we demand for ourselves, we mean the intelligent conservation, by means of theological construction, of the religious values which are vital today. Professor Brown, in the article referred to, says that the questions at issue between the various

[1] It will be readily understood that what is here suggested is something very different in idea from the "modern orthodox" movement in Germany, as represented by such writers as Theodor Kaftan, Seeberg, Stange, Dunkmann, and Grützmacher. That is essentially an attempt to convince the modern mind of the truth of the ancient and mediaeval orthodoxy.

[2] Harvard Theological Review, January, 1911.

representatives of the new theology are only differences of detail, and that, as compared with the issues which separate the new theology from the old, they are secondary and may be overlooked. The ties that bind together the various types of new theology are, as Professor Brown asserts, primarily intellectual. And it is this fact, as it seems to me, that constitutes at once the strength and the weakness of the newer movement as a whole. Because of the greater intellectual defensibility of the new, it will undoubtedly succeed in displacing the old. But will it minister to the needs of the modern man better than, or as well as, the older orthodoxy ministered to the demands of the religious spirit of its own day? This is the crucial question. Deeper even than the line of cleavage between the old theology and the new is the dividing line between the modern theology which is conservative of vital Christian faith and that whose only asset is its liberalism. There is a closer and more vital bond of union between Christians who, whether of the old theological persuasion or the new, are supremely interested in the christianization of the world, than there is between those whose sole bond of sympathy is antagonism to traditionalism in religious belief. The new theology, viewed in the large, is full of heresies; besides much that is sound and vital, it contains much that is destructive not simply of the orthodoxy of the past—that is a comparatively light matter and even in some respects a cause for congratulation—but it contains also much that is incompatible with a *modern* orthodoxy, a theology which shall conserve the genuine and essential religious values of the present

If we attempt to apply this idea of a free but discriminating modern orthodoxy, the preliminary question arises, What are the essential religious interests of today? In brief, man is still in need of religious peace combined with moral power. Perhaps the modern emphasis is upon the need of power, whereas the former insistence was upon the necessity of peace; but religious assurance is still indispensable, not only as an end in itself, but as a means to the highest degree of spiritual power. While continuing, then, to emphasize the ideas that strengthen the sense of responsibility and the demand for spiritual power, we need to achieve anew in the modern world the Christocentric faith that

the supreme power in the universe has been revealed to us in the character of Jesus Christ and in his attitude toward men. To conserve in the serious worker for individual and social regeneration a joyous confidence in the saving love of God, in so far as this can be done by a system of thought, is the task for which a modern orthodoxy is demanded.

How, then, is this ethico-religious faith to be conserved in the life of the modern man? Not by a simple return to the standards of the past, for, while much can be learned from a discriminating study of the way in which doctrine ministered to life in the past, it must be remembered that what was heretical and injurious to faith, when taught in connection with certain presuppositions formerly held, has in some instances come to be integrated into the very essentials of vital Christian faith. As an example one has only to cite the ancient heresy of patripassianism reappearing in the vital Christian doctrine that human sin causes suffering to God the Father, who, because of his love, is the great vicarious Sin-bearer for the salvation of the world. Moreover, on the other hand, much of the old orthodoxy is, in the modern situation, not so much heretical as irrelevant; it is not a live hypothesis. What is needed today is that the minister as theologian shall take account of the ways in which the interests of present-day Christian faith are being threatened by various tendencies of contemporary thought, and that he learn how these modern heresies may be eliminated from the new theology.

The chief heresies of the new theology may be grouped, I believe, into two main classes, the ultra-monistic heresies and the ultra-pluralistic heresies. The heresies of an ultra-monistic point of view were typically and somewhat sensationally set forth by R. J. Campbell in his much-discussed book, *The New Theology*. Some rationalistic monists deviate still further from the essentials of an ethico-religious faith in the direction of an all-engulfing Brahministic pantheism, while others do not go so far; but any view which merges man in a deterministic Absolute so as to threaten his responsible freedom; any view which tends to explain away moral evil as merely negative, as entirely due to mere immaturity, the absence of being, or to mere ignorance, the absence of knowing; or to explain it as a necessary means to good,

and therefore itself in reality good—any such view is plainly too inimical to moral values to have place in the faith of Christianity as the truly ethical religion, and is therefore to be rejected as a dangerous and destructive heresy. And indeed it is not simply as not moral enough that ultra-monism is to be rejected; it is defective religiously as well. If from the absolute point of view the validity of the distinction between moral good and evil is overcome, what we as moral beings must call moral evil is to be taken as a revelation of God, as well as what we must call moral good. All reality, as having its place in a rational and orderly system, is regarded as equally divine; or, if any degrees of revelation are recognized, the criterion of the divine is held to be intellectual power and clearness of ideas, rather than that highest good, the good will. What warrant then is there that our highest human values, including morality, will be conserved by a God or Absolute of whom morality cannot be predicated?

Ultra-monistic heresies, then, are objectionable primarily on the moral grounds that they depotentiate man and belie morality, and ultimately on religious grounds as well, as giving no satisfying view of God. Ultra-pluralistic heresies, on the other hand, are to be rejected primarily on the religious grounds that they depotentiate God and tend to make religion impossible or futile. A thorough-going pluralism which holds that reality is and always has been composed of a collection of absolutely independent individuals, is so irreligious as to be practically atheistic, and in the case of McTaggart of the University of Cambridge the atheism is explicitly avowed. But it makes little difference religiously whether or not the pluralist asserts that one of the non-interacting individuals is God; this isolated pluralistic God cannot act on the lives of other individuals, nor, according to thorough-going statements of the theory, upon the world or anything but the contents of his own inner life. Whether there is such a God or not, it is to man as if there were none; such a God can do nothing for him

A less extreme but still objectionable pluralism is that which has gained considerable currency through the philosophical writings of the late Professor William James and some others. This theory does not deny the possibility of God's acting upon

or within the life of man, but it restricts the divine presence and activity to those comparatively rare and more or less highly abnormal experiences that seem to be limited, practically, to people of highly emotional and "mystical" temperament,[3] and which it is now the fashion to interpret as due to the emergence above the threshold of consciousness of activities originating in a supposedly more or less psychical subconscious department of life. A recent noteworthy development of this theory is to be found in Professor Sanday's *Christologies Ancient and Modern*, where he uses this conception of the relation of God to man in his interpretation of the real divinity and real humanity of Christ. The religious weakness of this view is partially admitted by Professor James when he says, "That the God with whom, starting from the hither side of our own extra-marginal self, we come at its remoter margin into commerce should be the absolute world-ruler, is of course a very considerable over-belief." [4] But more than that, such a God—not to dwell upon the acknowledged possibility that it may be gods, rather than God—such a God is necessarily absent from much and indeed by far the most of what is of greatest value in human life and experience. What is qualitatively most like our ideal of the divine has, for the most part, nothing whatever to do with the real God. The true, the beautiful, and the good in human life would become the only worthy object of human worship, and God himself be almost negligible. In no comprehensive sense could he be said to be Saviour of the world. In all but a comparatively small fraction of his life, man would be necessarily irreligious, if indeed any one could be really religious at first hand,—except one who happened to have a consciousness with what Professor James calls a "leaky margin," or unusual openness of the "subliminal door," one who is at least liable to have trances and various sorts of sensory and motor automatisms. Is that faith completely

[3] When the mystic interprets all reality from the point of view gained within the mystical experience in its more extreme forms, the result is an extreme monism in which the individuality of man is merged in that of God; when he interprets life and reality from the ordinary non-mystical point of view of common sense while attaching religious value to the mystical experience alone, a somewhat too pluralistic world-view is the result.

[4] Varieties of Religious Experience, p. 518.

Christian which is satisfied to say that it is not in God, but in occasional subconscious touch with him, that we live and move and have our being? One may be forgiven, surely, for refusing to believe, as a recent writer has put it—rather too strongly perhaps, but still strikingly—"that the feet of the supernatural deliberately choose to tread the slime of the subliminal . . . while avoiding the sunlit hills of full rational consciousness." [5]

It would seem then that the modern theologian is between Scylla and Charybdis. How may he avoid both of these opposite dangers,—on the one hand that of being ensnared by the devil of ultra-pluralism, and on the other hand that of being engulfed in the deep sea of ultra-monism? Or, positively, how is he to conserve for the modern mind the essentials of a vital ethico-religious faith? Truly, it is no insignificant service that is demanded of the constructive theologian of today. He must do for himself and for his generation what Athanasius and Anselm and others like them did for their earlier days; he must find or frame an orthodoxy for the times. Is there any theologian or any school of theologians whose members are successfully addressing themselves to this task?

It may not be invidious, perhaps, to express the opinion that among all the various schools and tendencies of modern theological thought, the Ritschlian theology is most deserving of attention in this regard. It has serious shortcomings, indeed, but it starts well and is doubtless upon the right track. It is pre-eminently a Christocentric theology. It finds its normative revelation of God in the person and work of Christ as the founder of the kingdom of God among men; Christianity is the religion of the Christ-like God. All that is involved in this Christocentric principle must have place in one's theology, as belonging to the essentials of Christian faith; all that contradicts it, as, for example, certain features of extreme monism and extreme pluralism, must be rejected as heretical; all that is neutral may be left as irrelevant or at least comparatively unimportant. Theology, it is maintained, must be religious, and not speculative; ethical, and not mystical; evangelically Christian, and not syncretistic.

[5] F. M. Davenport, Primitive Traits in Religious Revivals, p. 280.

In these propositions lie the strength of Ritschlianism, and at the same time its weakness. On the one hand they guarantee that no content will be admitted into the theology which would destroy its vital essence, namely, faith in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has revealed himself for our moral redemption. This vital content would be imperilled if the results of metaphysical speculation, or of suggestion in mystical experience, or of the comparative study of religions were uncritically admitted to a place in our theology. But on the other hand the content of a permanently Christocentric theology might be further developed by the fructifying influence of the speculations of the philosopher, the suggestions and inner assurances of the mystic, and the discoveries of the student of other religions. And, what is more important still, to tell the Christian thinker that he must not use the content of his Christian faith as an hypothesis in metaphysical speculation, nor seek to reassure himself of the truth of his faith in the immediacy of religious feeling, nor submit his religion to the test of the survival of the fittest in competition with the great faiths of the world, is to imperil Christian certainty, and thus in the end to endanger the content of our faith itself; for it encourages the doubt that perhaps the Christocentric faith is not capable of meeting these varied tests of thought and feeling and action. Surely our Christian faith is made of sterner stuff than this timidity of the Ritschlians would suggest.

The fact is, Ritschlianism has the primary qualifications for being the orthodoxy of the modern man, but it greatly needs to be supplemented. One of the criticisms commonly directed against it is that its judgments are subjective evaluations with no sufficient guarantee of their objective validity, as, for example, in the case of the divinity of Christ, where it is claimed that the Ritschlian doctrine may be interpreted as meaning that if Christ is felt to have divine value for our experience, he is divine; if not, he is not divine. It is commonly held that greater explicitness is desirable with reference to the divinity of Christ, perhaps largely because of the central place which that doctrine has had in the orthodoxy of the past. It is claimed that an "ethical" divinity is not enough; in other words, it is not enough to say that the moral quality of Jesus' life is good enough to be called

divine, nor even to say that he was the man who did the divine work of bringing salvation to the human race. There must be predicated, it is declared, an essential or metaphysical divinity, such as has always been held among the orthodox Christians. But according to the idea of a modern orthodoxy, if an essential divinity of Christ is to be asserted, it must be because the genuine religious needs of the time demand it, not because it has been believed in the past. That there is in reality a present religious need for the doctrine of the essential divinity of Christ is best shown by turning from christology to theology proper. The other side of the doctrine of the "ethical" divinity of Christ is the Christocentric doctrine of God; or, in other words, if Christ is like God, then God is like Christ. But if we are entitled to say that God is like Christ, we must and may go farther. If God is really like Christ, he must, like Christ, be actually doing what the Christ-like spirit everywhere must do; that is, he must be not simply providing for humanity in an external way, but working for the salvation, the moral redemption, of humanity as effectively as it is possible for God to do. Now if this means anything at all, if God is not merely a good-natured being who wishes us well, but can do nothing for us, it means that the saving effect of Christ's work in human history is, in the full sense of the word, God's doing. Thus we conclude that God is not merely *like* Christ; God was *in* Christ, reconciling the world to himself, and thereby redeeming, regenerating, and progressively perfecting the sons of men. But if God was in Christ, by parity of reasoning we must conclude that God was and is in the Christ-like everywhere; and here we come upon the Christian doctrine of the Holy Spirit, or the christianized form of the doctrine of the immanence of God, as opposed to the distinctionless immanence of pantheism and its monistic relatives. And this doctrine of degrees of the actual immanence of God, varying according to the measure of likeness to the spirit of Christ, while it is the needed supplement to Ritschlianism and thus fills out the outline of a modern orthodoxy, at the same time leads one over naturally and necessarily into the field of metaphysics. These essential principles of modern orthodoxy have a right to be taken as working hypotheses in metaphysics and elaborated and tested in the

light of all relevant knowledge. And in the end this will doubtless mean at least as valuable a service of religion to philosophy as of philosophy to religion, for it is high time for metaphysics to recognize that the question of monism and pluralism is first of all a religious question and only secondly and secondarily a question of philosophy.

This task of finding, elaborating, and defending a modern orthodoxy is not an affair of the professional theologian alone; it is the business of the minister, and indeed of the whole religious community. The theologian doubtless has as much to learn from his brethren in the active ministry as he has to teach any of them, just as the true minister can always learn as much from his people as they have to learn from him. It is a case of the mutual service of reflection and experience. The theologian and the minister as a student of theology must study systems of thought, but even more imperative is the need to study religious life, to interrogate persistently and with due discrimination the human heart in its necessities and in its assurances, for in the end, when the transition to a modern position has become general, it is the Christian consciousness at its deepest and best that must pass final judgment as to what shall constitute the orthodoxy of the modern man.

THE NATURE OF PRAYER[1]

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Prayer is the intercourse of the human spirit with a reality, or being, realized as greater-than-human and either conceived or treated as personal. This definition, it will be observed, leaves open the question whether the object of religion is always reflectively known to be personal; yet it regards prayer, the characteristic religious experience, as a personal and personifying consciousness, the worshipper's awareness of superhuman reality in vital connection with him, the worshipper. As William James has said, "The religious phenomenon, studied as an inner fact, and apart from ecclesiastical or theological complications has shown itself to consist, everywhere and at all its stages, in the consciousness which individuals have of an intercourse between themselves and higher powers with which they feel themselves to be related."[2] Or, to quote Jevons, "rites and ceremonies, sacrifices and altars exist" for the sake of "the prayer in which man's soul rises or seeks to rise to God."[3]

This paper considers the nature of prayer thus conceived as the expression of intercourse with God—or with the gods. Such a conception, it must be reiterated, does not involve an intellectualist view of religion and does not suppose that the worshipper has of necessity framed a metaphysical idea of God as personal being. It is the curious error of many contemporary writers to suppose that one cannot be conscious of a being as self, or person, without having formed such a speculative conception of the

[1] This paper, substantially as here presented, constituted the second of a series of four lectures, on the Psychology of Public Worship, delivered in July, 1910, at the Harvard Summer School of Theology.

[2] The Varieties of Religious Experience, p. 465.

[3] F. B. Jevons, An Introduction to the Study of Comparative Religion, 1908, p. 149.

self. Thus, Ames [4] believes that he has refuted the spiritistic view of religion when he has proved that the child or the savage cannot attain the conception of "the closely articulated and unified self." The truth is that one may have a predominantly emotional or volitional consciousness of oneself and of other self, human and divine. The records of primitive religious rites and the expressions of developed religious experience alike confirm the belief that such a personal consciousness, however fragmentary and confused, is involved in prayer.

The teaching of this paper stands, therefore, in complete opposition to the view that a God is merely a "central object" of attention [5] and to all the theories which identify religion with magic, sacrament with charm, and prayer with incantation or impersonal ejaculation. It may well be true that magic antedates religion, and it is certain that prayers may be combined with incantation [6] but the historically later experience is not necessarily identical with that on which it follows; and prayer and incantation, though directed to the same object, are utterly diverse in nature,—in Leuba's words, "they combine but never fuse." The difference between magic and religion may be insisted on with the greater vigor since it is taught by scholars who differ widely in their views of the relation between the two. Frazer, who believes that religion arises later than magic through a tardy recognition of the inherent falsehood and barrenness of magic, naturally asserts "a fundamental . . . opposition of principle between magic and religion." [7] But Lang and Leuba and Jevons, who reject this intellectualist account of the origin of religion, hold with equal vigor the belief that the difference between prayer and charm or incantation is "essential, fundamental, as little to be ignored as it is possible to bridge." [8] The dis-

[4] The Psychology of Religious Experience, 1910, p. 972, etc. Cf. Irving King, "The Differentiation of the Religious Consciousness" in Psychological Review, Monograph Supplement, 1905, pp. 2, 20, etc.

[5] Ames, op. cit., pp. 97 ff., 106, 120, 172 ff., 311.

[6] See J. H. Leuba, The Psychological Origin and the Nature of Religion, pp. 65 ff.; and M. Jastrow, as cited below, p. 492, and footnote.

[7] The Golden Bough, second edition, p. xvi. Cf. F. B. Jevons, who quotes these words, op. cit., p. 94.

[8] F. B. Jevons, An Introduction to the Study of Comparative Religion, 1908, p. 71. Cf. p. 104.

tinction may be briefly formulated in the following statements:— An incantation is conceived as coercing the divine power for human ends, in a mechanical, non-personal fashion.[9] For example, an incantation or the wearing of an amulet is supposed mysteriously and, as it were, mechanically, irrationally, without intervening conscious process, to influence the superhuman, controlling powers. Prayer, on the other hand, even though directed to the same end as that of the magical incantation, is the address of spirit to spirit; a personal attitude by which the divine self is conceived to be affected in essentially the way in which one person is affected by another.

The confusion of prayer with incantation seems to be closely connected, as effect or cause, with the very prevalent misconception which identifies prayer with petition. From this point of view prayer is synonymous with request or supplication, a begging, beseeching, besieging, demanding attitude of human self to superhuman power. This conception falsifies the history of religion and unduly narrows the meaning of prayer, which, as communion with God, may take on any form of personal intercourse. Unquestionably this has been the teaching of the church. "To speak boldly," says Clement of Alexandria, "prayer is conversation and intercourse with God." [10] "Prayer," says St. Thomas, "is the ascent of the soul to God." [11] Sabatier repeats almost the words of Clement when he describes prayer as "intercourse with God, . . . intimate commerce, . . . interior dialogue." [12] And the outcome of that most penetrating study of personal religion, William James's *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, is a similar definition of prayer as "every kind of inward communion or conversation with the power recognized as divine." [13]

Thanksgiving and penitence, as well as petition, are forms of

[9] See Leuba, op. cit., pp. 12 ff., 49 ff.; Tiele, Elements of the Science of Religion, vol. ii, pp. 16, 135 ff.; Wundt, Völkerpsychologie, Mythus und Religion, 2ter Teil, pp. 182 ff.

[10] Stromata, vii, 242 d.

[11] Summa theologica, secunda secundae, quaest. lxxxiii, art. i, 2.

[12] Esquisse d'une philosophie de la religion, pp. 24–26, quoted by James, as cited below, pp. 464–465.

[13] The Varieties of Religious Experience, 1902, p. 464; cf. p. 477, note 2.

intercourse with God "common in the most primitive faiths." We may, therefore, profitably widen and deepen our conception of prayer if we bring together illustrations of its different forms from different stages of the religious experience. Fundamental to all is the prayer which expresses not petition, nor penitence, nor thanksgiving, but the mere sense of fellowship. A seemingly perfect example are the prayers, quoted by Tylor, addressed by the Samoyed woman on the steppes of Asia to the sun: "When thou risest, I too rise from my bed; when thou sinkest down, I too get me to rest." [14] I know of nothing to compare with this except the naïveté, sophisticated to be sure in comparison with this utter simplicity, of what may be named the narrative portions of St. Augustine's *Confessions*. Like the Samoyed woman, St. Augustine is, as it were, assured of God's interest, of his companionship, and talks to him as simply as to a sympathetic human hearer.

Next to these, and still at a far remove from prayers of petition, one may group the prayers of reverent contemplation, of adoration, prayers in which the emphasis falls, not on human need, or weakness, or satisfaction, but on the divine completeness and greatness, the prayers in which, to use Everett's fine phrase, the feelings of the worshipper centre in God. An example of such prayer is found in the opening lines of a Babylonian hymn to the Sun God:

> O Shamash! out of the horizon of heaven thou issuest forth,
> The bolt of the bright heavens thou openest,
> The door of heaven thou dost open.
> O Shamash! over the world thou dost raise thy head;
> O Shamash! with the glory of heaven thou coverest the world. [15]

Countless illustrations of these prayers of confidence and adoration may be found in the Hebrew scriptures and in the writings

[14] E. B. Tylor, Primitive Culture, vol. ii, pp. 291–292. Cf. D. G. Brinton, Religions of Primitive People, 1897: "The earliest hymns and prayers do not, as a rule, contain definite requests but are general invitations to the gods to be present."

[15] Quoted and translated from Sir H. C. Rawlinson, The Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia, 20(2) K 3343, by M. Jastrow, The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria, 1898, p. 301. Like all these hymns to Shamash, this hymn passes into an incantation,—in Jastrow's words (p. 293, etc.), a probable "concession made to the persistent belief in the efficacy of certain formulas."

of Christian saints of all ages. "Thou art the same and thy years have no change," says the psalmist. "Thou hast made us for thyself," is the prayer of Augustine, "and our hearts are restless till they rest in thee." And Thomas à Kempis, a thousand years later, prays: "Thou brightness of eternal glory, thou comfort of the pilgrim soul, with thee is my tongue without voice and my very silence speaketh unto thee. Come, oh come; for without thee I shall have no joyful day or hour; for thou art our joy, and without thee my table is empty." Taken together these prayers of fellowship and of adoration may be contrasted with those more egoistic prayers in which the stress falls not on divine greatness or strength but on human need or gratification.

Prayers of thanksgiving, however superficially related to these prayers of adoration, yet differ from them in requiring a less exclusive absorption in God, in starting from the sense of human satisfaction, human delight, which is then attributed to God as cause: "O that men would praise the Lord," cries the psalmist, "for his goodness and for his wonderful works to the children of men." Prayers of thanksgiving belong to very primitive peoples; and in sacrifice one often finds concrete expression of gratitude. Such sacrifices, exemplified by first-fruits, ceremonials, and burnt offerings, are most often accompanied by verbal expressions. "Even the savage," Jevons asserts, "who simply says 'Here, Tari, I have brought you something to eat' is expressing thanks, albeit in savage fashion." [16]

Equally egoistic in their emphasis are the prayers of penitence, the acknowledgments of sin. For in these the worshipper's keenest consciousness is of his weakness, his guilt, his unworthiness. "O my God, my sins are many, great are my transgressions," is the confession of the sinner in one of the penitential psalms of the Babylonians.[17] "I acknowledge my transgression and my sin is ever before me," says a Hebrew psalmist. Yet always, mingled with the consciousness of his own sin, the penitent has the vivid consciousness of God, else this were no religious experience, and the consciousness of intercourse with God, else it were no prayer. In penitential prayer I am conscious of my

[16] Jevons, op. cit., p. 183; cf. pp. 186–187.
[17] Jastrow, op. cit., p. 321.

weakness, my failure, my sin, not as a merely individual experience, and not simply as a contravention of human law, an attack on society, a wrong to my fellow-men, but in its relation to God. I am conscious of my weakness as contrasted with his strength, of my sin as opposition to his will. And I cry, in the acuteness of this personal contact of sinning soul with divine self, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned."

Penitential prayers are clearly allied to one of the forms of petition,—prayer for forgiveness. Sacrificial offerings for sin are the concrete manifestations of this yearning for pardon. Even the effort to bribe the god is in essence a prayer for pardon, even though it evidences a cleft between religion and morality. So the savage who says, "Here is a bit of the pig, good Hiero, take it and say nothing of it," expresses at the least his sense of the power of the god to deliver him from the consequence of wrong-doing.

But one need not turn to the Hebrew and Christian scriptures only for illustration of prayers for forgiveness quite devoid of the flavor of bribery and of intrigue. Here, for example, is an Aztec prayer: "O merciful Lord, let this chastisement with which thou hast visited us give us freedom from evil and follies." [18] The following is quoted by Tylor from the *Rig-Veda:* "Through want of strength, thou strong and bright god, have I gone wrong; have mercy, almighty, have mercy." [19] A Babylonian psalm, cited by Jastrow, contains a passionate confession of sin:

> I seek for help, but no one takes my hand;
> I weep, but no one approaches me.
> I call aloud, but no one hears me.
> Full of woe, I grovel in the dust without looking up;
> To my merciful god I turn speaking with sighs.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> To the known or unknown god do I speak with sighs,
> To the known or unknown goddess do I speak with sighs.
> O lord, look upon me, accept my lament;
> O goddess, look upon me, accept my lament.

One can compare with this no other than the familiar words of the Hebrew psalms: "Out of the depths have I cried unto thee:

[18] Brinton, op. cit., p. 106; quoted from Sahagun, Hist. de Nueva España, lib. v.

[19] Rig-Veda, vii, 89, 3; quoted by Tylor, Primitive Culture, vol. ii, p. 374.

O Lord, hear my voice. . . . Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness, according to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgression."

Of a second and ethically even higher type of petitionary prayer are the prayers for moral strength. In the petition, quoted by Brinton, of a Sioux Indian the prayer to be kept from sin is combined with a petition of the material sort. "O my grandfather, the Earth," the Indian prays, "I ask that thou givest me a long life and strength of body. When I go to war, let me capture many horses and kill many enemies. But in peace, let not anger enter my heart." [20] Tylor quotes an Aztec prayer for a newly made ruler: "Make him, Lord, as your true image, and permit him not to be proud and haughty in your throne and court." [21] The psalms abound in such petitions: "Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens. Behold as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress, so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that he have mercy upon us."

We come finally to the petitions for material good. Unquestionably, prayers of this sort are most frequent, not merely among primitive peoples, but throughout the ages of prayer. These are the prayers for food, for raiment, for success in war and in love, and for length of life. Thus, the prayer of the Nootka Indian, "Let me live, not be sick, find the enemy, not fear him, find him asleep and kill a great many of him," closely resembles the petition of the Hebrew psalmist: "Let his days be few, . . . let his children be continually vagabonds and beg; let the extortioner catch all that he hath. . . . Let there be none to extend mercy unto him. . . . Let this be the reward of mine adversaries from the Lord. . . . But do thou for me, O God, the Lord, for thy name's sake." And that of the Gold Coast negro, "Give me rue and yams, gold and agries, . . . slaves, riches, and health," could be matched by many prayers offered in Christian churches.

Now these are the prayers which are characterized, by those who

[20] Brinton, op. cit., p. 106; quoted from Clark, Indian Sign Language, p. 309.

[21] Tylor, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 373; quoted from Sahagun.

oppose the practice of prayer, as irrational or even immoral. Petition, it is said, unless it is an essentially futile, ejaculatory exercise, a device for relieving emotion by the aimless expressing of it, must involve belief in the possibility of obtaining its end. And this requires the assumption that the eternal purposes can be altered for the caprice or the wish of the individual. How can I rationally pray for favorable weather, for riches, for personal success? Either the satisfaction of my wish is already inevitable, or I must believe that I can deflect the divine purpose. In full agreement with this protest, I hold that prayers for concrete and individual good are inconsistent alike with the deterministic hypothesis underlying all natural science, with any absolutist philosophy, and with the form of theism which conceives of God's purposes as eternal. Such prayers are, in fact, irrational forms of the essentially reasonable expression of the consciousness of our dependence on God and of his interest in our concerns.

But this unqualified acknowledgment of the crude and unjustified demand for material and selfish good involves no searching criticism of prayer as such. For, as we have found, historical investigation and psychological analysis unite in the demonstration that prayer is more than petition. Prayers of fellowship and adoration and petitions for spiritual goods, obviously assume no reversal of God's purpose, no opposition to the common good in the interest of any one person. And even petition for individual and material good is rational and morally justifiable if it be fused with the conscious submission of human to divine will. A prayer of the Khonds, a tribe of Northern India, reads: "O Lord, we know not what is good for us. Thou knowest it. For it we pray." [22] This recalls the prayer of Fénelon, "Lord, I know not what I ought to ask of thee; thou only knowest what I need. . . . Behold my needs which I know not myself. . . . Smite or heal; depress me or raise me up; I adore all thy purposes without knowing them; I am silent. . . . I yield myself to thee. I would have no other desire than to accomplish thy will. Teach me to pray. Pray thyself in me." [23] So Socrates "prayed simply for things good, because the gods knew best what is good;" [24]

[22] Brinton, op. cit., p. 105; cf. Jevons, op. cit., p. 139.
[23] Fénelon.
[24] Memorabilia, i, 3 2.

and St. Paul says that "we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the spirit itself maketh intercession for us." Frederick Robertson has said, "That prayer which does not succeed in moderating our wish, in changing the passionate desire into still submission, the anxious, tumultuous expectation into silent surrender, is no true prayer, and proves that we have not the spirit of true prayer. That life is most holy in which there is least of petition and desire, and most of waiting upon God; that in which petition most often passes into thanksgiving." In prayer like this, petition itself has become acceptance. I do not merely surrender my will, I identify my will with God's, if I pray, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight."

Petitions of this sort, the free expression to God, our heavenly Father, of those wishes and desires which we know that he knows and which yet we pour out before him in the great personal instinct of complete intercourse, petitions in which the passion of desire is fused with loyal adoption of God's purpose and with full submission to his will, most clearly show the essential meaning of answers to prayer. The term is usually taken to designate the instances in which prayer for material good is followed by the happening of the event prayed for. And discussions of the answers to prayer, on the one hand, heap up instances of material health and wealth and prosperity following on specific petitions, and, on the other hand, insist that the rational order of the universe cannot be conceived as broken to meet individual need, and that these alleged "answers" are one and all coincidences. With the whole weary controversy we have no concern. For it utterly mistakes the nature of God's answer to prayer. Answer to prayer is, essentially, the recognition of the human by the divine self, the reaction of the divine on the human, the response of God's love to human love and trust. In a word, God's answer to prayer is God's consciousness of the human self as turning to God. The conviction that prayer is, in this sense, answered is indeed an inherent factor in prayer. In the words of James, "The intercourse is realized as mutual. . . . The conviction that something is genuinely transacted is the very core of living religion." [25]

[25] The Varieties of Religious Experience, p. 466, note 2; cf. p. 477, note 2.

The relation thus conceived between man and God is, it must be insisted, harmonizable with theistic religion—and, I may add, with personalistic philosophy of every type, pluralist or absolutist. For, granting the existence of divine and human selves, the analogy of human experience shows the possibility—nay, the necessity—of the reciprocal relation of spirit to spirit. Not, then, through any acceptance of a special revelation, but through the recognition of the inevitableness of the relation of intercourse between spirits, Tennyson cries,—

> "Speak to him, thou, for he hears, and spirit with spirit can meet;
> Closer is he than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet."

Up to this point, prayer has been discussed as relation of the single worshipper to God. But it is evident that this analysis of prayer is in no way opposed to the prevalent teaching that prayer and sacrament and religious rite are social in their origin. Thus Jevons asserts that "public worship has been from the beginning the condition without which private worship could not begin and without which private worship cannot continue"; [26] and more recently E. S. Ames argues that "these ceremonials are social and therefore have the massive and corporate value of the entire community consciousness." [27] Not only, indeed, the primitive but the developed religious consciousness may be truly "social." For in spite of the unassailable privacy of the relation between me, the worshipper, and God, there may yet be fused with my awareness of this individual relation the consciousness of other selves related, as I am related, to God. Of course, this feeling—the experience of sympathy or sharing—implies the recognition of a common God. Such an experience finds expression in the well-known prayer of Robert Louis Stevenson: "We beseech thee, Lord, to behold us with favor, folk of many families gathered together in the peace of this roof, weak men and women subsisting under the covert of thy patience." This is the expression of feeling which one could not have toward one's own particular guardian spirit, or *daimon;* the feeling, on the other hand, of a family to a household or patriarchal god; of the

[26] An Introduction to the Study of Comparative Religion, p. 176.
[27] The Psychology of Religious Experience, p. 72, note 2.

members of a tribe to a tribal god; in a word, of the members of a community to the community god. It is a feeling widening indeed with every enlarging conception of God until at last it becomes a consciousness "of the union of the world of all spirits,"[28] and incarnates itself in the universal prayer to Our Father.

This consciousness of other selves in common relation to God is the essential mark of public worship. It may appear in various stages and grades of intensity and clearness,—as an emotional consciousness of myself affected by these other selves in common relation to God, or as a developed and reflective consciousness, a realization of myself as member of a social organization, of a church or religious community. "O God"—we pray in these moments when we are profoundly conscious of ourselves and of all mankind in universal relation to the divine self—"O God, who art and wast and art to come, before whose face the generations rise and pass away; age after age the living seek thee, and find that of thy faithfulness there is no end. Our fathers in their pilgrimage walked by thy guidance and rested on thy compassion; still to their children be thou the cloud by day, the fire by night. O thou Sole Source of peace and righteousness, join us in one communion with thy prophets and saints who have trusted in thee."[29]

Such a reflective consciousness of the network of human relations may, it is true, conceivably crowd out the God-consciousness from which it sprang—and we have then ecclesiasticism and institutionalism without religion, husk without kernel. At the other extreme, the worshipper may be utterly inattentive to his fellow, primarily conscious only of his individual relation to God, yet even here he is affected in spite of himself by the emotion and the loyalty expressed in common rites, and even by the bare presence of his fellow-worshippers. The justification of public worship is, indeed, primarily this admitted contagiousness of emotion, this suggestibility of the individual through the social group.

But neither the vividness of the experience of public worship nor the possibility, or even probability, that purely social rites

[28] James, op. cit., p. 281, note.
[29] James Martineau.

antedated prayers to a God, treated as personal, justify the conclusion of Ames and King and other contemporary writers, that religion is a purely social experience, "the consciousness of the highest social values, the social attitude of solidarity."[30] Such a conclusion unduly obliterates the widely recognized distinction between the merely social and the religious experience, and is with difficulty reconciled, even by its advocates, with the records of primitive religions.[31] Let it be granted that the community-meal preceded and grew into the tribal sacrifice, and that the prayer resembles the earlier incantation. Yet neither form of words nor feast becomes religious until it involves "the very movement itself of the soul putting itself in a personal relation of contact with the mysterious power of which it feels the presence."

[30] Ames, op. cit., pp. 144, 168.

[31] Cf. Ames, op. cit., p. 134: "Prayer appears to justify the belief in supernatural beings." Cf. Wundt, Völkerpsychologie, Mythus und Religion, 3ter Teil, for the explicit distinction between the primitive social and moral consciousness and primitive religion. Wundt says, for example: "Die Keime des Sittlichen [liegen] zunächst ausserhalb des Gebiets religiöser Betätigung (p. 690). . . . Die [Wurzel] der Religion ist die . . . Idee des Uebersinnlichen; die der Sittlichkeit liegt zunächst in den sinnlichen Affekten (p. 751)."

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